Ancient Archives and Archival Traditions

Concepts of Record-Keeping in the Ancient World

Edited by

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Acknowledgements

Contents

Illustrations

Acknowledgements

The general map on p. xxi, Figs. 3.1–4, Figs. 4.1–4, and Figs. 8.3–8.4 were drawn by Paul Simmons, Oxford.

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Figs. 4.5 and 4.6 are from originals published in H. Gasche, *La Babylonie au 17ᵉ siècle a.n.è* (MHEM 1; Ghent, 1989), plans 4 and 3 respectively.

Fig. 8.1 is from T. G. Palaima and J. C. Wright, 'Ins and Outs of the Archives Rooms at Pylos: Form and Function in a Mycenaean Palace', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 89 (1985), 251–62 at p. 253, fig. 2. Figs. 8.2 and 8.9 were drawn by Alicia Carter, with assistance from Kevin Pluta. Fig. 8.3 was redrawn from J. Bennet, 'Knossos in Context: Comparative Perspectives on the Linear B Administration of LM II–III Crete', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 94 (1990), 193–211 at p. 208, fig. 5. Fig. 8.4 was redrawn from C. W. Shelmerdine, 'The Palatial Bronze Age of the Southern and Central Greek Mainland', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 101/3 (1997), 537–85 at 583, fig. 1. Fig. 8.5 is from E. L. Bennett, Jr., *The Pylos Tablets: Texts of the Inscriptions Found, 1939–1954* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 15 and 84. Fig. 8.6 is from J. Bennet, 'The Structure of the Linear B Administration at Knossos', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 89 (1985), 231–49 at p. 232, fig. 1. Fig. 8.7 is from J. Driessen, 'Le palais de Cnossos au MR II–III: Combien de destructions?', in J. Driessen and A. Farnoux (eds.), *La Crète mycénienne* (Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, suppl. 30; 1997), 113–34 at 131, fig. 9. Fig. 8.8 is from A. Sacconi, *Corpus delle iscrizioni vascolari in lineare B* (Incunabula Graeca; Rome, 1974), 113.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of editions of cuneiform texts not given here are those listed in the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, vol. š/iii (Chicago, 1992), pp. v–xxii.

AA	*Archäologischer Anzeiger*
ABL	R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, vols. i–xiv (London and Chicago, 1892–1914)
ADFU	Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka
AECT	F. M. Fales, *Aramaic Epigraphs on Clay Tablets of the Neo-Assyrian Period* (Rome, 1986)
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AHw	W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, vol. i² (Wiesbaden, 1985); vol. ii (Wiesbaden, 1972); vol. iii (Wiesbaden, 1981)
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AKT 1–3	*Ankara Kültepe Tabletleri* = *Ankaraner Kültepe Texte*, vol. i (Ankara 1990); vol. ii (Ankara, 1995); vol. iii (Stuttgart, 1995)
AM	*Athenische Mitteilungen*
AMI	*Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*
AnSt	*Anatolian Studies*
AO	siglum for Near Eastern antiquities, including cuneiform tablets, in the Musée du Louvre
AO	*Antiquités orientales*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AoF	*Altorientalische Forschungen*
ARET	Archivi reali di Ebla—Testi (Rome)
ATHE	B. Kienast, *Die altassyrischen Texte des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Heidelberg und der Sammlung Erlenmeyer-Basel* (Berlin, 1960)
ATL	*The Athenian Tribute Lists*, vol. i (Cambridge, Mass., 1939); vols. ii–iv (Princeton, NJ, 1949–53)
AUWE	Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka, Endberichte
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*

BDHP	L. Waterman, *Business Documents of the Hammurapi Period* (London, 1916)
BIN	*Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J. B. Nies*, vols. i–x (Yale and New Haven, 1889–1987)
BM	siglum for tablets in the British Museum
BR 2	J. Kohler and F. E. Peiser, *Aus dem babylonischen Rechtsleben*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1891)
BRM	Babylonian Records in the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan
BRM 1	A. T. Clay, *Babylonian Business Transactions of the First Millennium B.C.* (BRM 1; New York, 1912)
CAD	A. L. Oppenheim *et al.* (eds.), *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago, 1956–)
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History*
Camb.	J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cambyses, König von Babylon (529–521 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1890)
CCT	*Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in the British Museum*, vols. i–vi (London, 1921–75)
CDAFI	*Cahiers de la Délégation française en Iran*
CID	*Corpus des inscriptions de Delphes*
CM 3a, b	C. Wunsch, *Die Urkunden des babylonischen Geschäftsmannes Iddin-Marduk: Zum Handel mit Naturalien im 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Cuneiform Monographs 3a–b; Groningen, 1993)
CMS	Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel
CP	*Classical Philology*
CT	Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum, London
CTMMA	I. Starr (ed.), *Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, i. *Tablets, Cones, and Bricks of the Third and Second Millennia* (New York, 1988), 92–142
CTN	Cuneiform Texts from Nimrud
Cyr.	J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Cyrus, König von Babylon (538–529 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1890)
Dar.	J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Darius, König von Babylon (521–485 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1897)
DeZ	siglum for texts from the National Museum of Deir-ez-Zor
EL	G. Eisser and J. Lewy, *Altassyrische Rechtsurkunden vom Küllepe*, vols. i–ii (MVAeG 30 and 35/3; Leipzig, 1930–5)
EvM	B. T. A. Evetts, *Inscriptions of the Reigns of Evil-Merodach (B.C. 562–559), Neriglissar (B.C. 559–555), and Laborosoarchod (B.C. 555)* (Leipzig, 1892)

FAOS	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien
FdD	Fouilles de Delphes
FNALD	J. N. Postgate, *Fifty Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents* (Warminster, 1976)
Fort.	siglum used for some of the unpublished Persepolis fortification texts
GORILA	L. Godart and L.-P. Olivier, *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A* (5 vols.; Paris, 1976–85)
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HT	Hagia Triada
IC	M. Guarducci (ed.), *Inscriptiones Creticae*, vols. i–iv (Libreria dello Stato; Rome, 1935–50)
ICK 1	B. Hrozný, *Inscriptions cunéiformes de Kültepe*, vol. i (Prague, 1952)
ICK 2	L. Matouš, *Inscriptions cunéiformes de Kültepe*, vol. ii (Prague, 1962)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873–)
IK	*Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* (Bonn, 1973–)
IM	inventory number of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
KAJ	E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur juristischen Inhalts* (50. Wiss. Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft; Berlin, 1927)
KH	Khania
KKS	L. Matouš and M. Matoušová-Rajmová, *Kappadokische Keilschrifttafeln mit Siegeln aus den Sammlungen der Karlsuniversität in Prag* (Prague, 1984)
KN	Knossos
kt 73/k	Kültepe tablets found in 1973 (etc.) in *kārum* Kaniš
kt a/k	unpublished texts from Kültepe (kt) found in *kārum* Kaniš (/k) since the first year of excavations, 1948 (=a) until 1972 (=z)
KTS 1	J. Lewy, *Die altassyrischen Texte von Kültepe bei Kaisarije: Keilschrifttexte in den Antiken-Museen zu Istanbul*, vol. i (Constantinople, 1926)
KTS 2	V. Donbaz, V., *Keilschrifttexte in den Antiken-Museen zu Stambul*, vol. ii (Stuttgart, 1989)

KUG   K. Hecker, *Die Keilschrifttexte der Universitätsbibliothek Giessen* (Giessen, 1966)

LB   unpublished Old Assyrian texts in the Liagre Böhl Collection of the Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, Leiden

MARI   *Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires*

MEE   Materiali epigrafici di Ebla; Naples

MHEM   Mesopotamian History and Environment, Memoirs; Ghent

MHET   Mesopotamian History and Environment, Texts; Ghent

ML   R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis (eds.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1969)

Mold   A. B. Moldenke, *Cuneiform Texts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pts. 1–2 (New York, 1893)

NABU   *Notes assyriologiques brèves et utiles*

NALK   T. Kwasman, *Neo-Assyrian Legal Documents in the Kunyunjik Collection of the British Museum* (Rome, 1988)

NAPR   *Northern Akkad Project Reports*

NATAPA   siglum of texts published in F. M. Fales and L. Jakob-Rost, 'Neo-Assyrian Texts from Assur Private Archives in the Vorderasiatisches Museum of Berlin. Part I', *SAAB* 5 (1991), 1–157

NBC   siglum for texts from the Nies Babylonian collection at Yale

Nbk   J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Nabuchodonosor, König von Babylon (604–561 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1889)

Nbn   J. N. Strassmaier, *Inschriften von Nabonidus, König von Babylon (555–538 v. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1889)

Ner   texts from the reign of Neriglissar in *EvM*

Nomima   H. van Effenterre and F. Ruzé, *Nomima: Recueil d'inscriptions politiques et juridiques de l'archaïsme grec*, vols. i–ii (Rome, 1994–5)

OA   *Oriens Antiquus*

OCD   *Oxford Classical Dictionary*[3]

OECT   Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts

OGIS   W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, vols. i–ii (Berlin, 1903–5)

OLZ   *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*

Or   *Orientalia*, new series

PE   Petras

PF   R. T. Hallock, *Persepolis Fortification Texts* (Chicago, 1969)

PFa   R. T. Hallock, 'Selected Fortification Texts', *CDAFI* 8 (1978), 109–36

PF-NN   R. T. Hallock, 'Persepolis Fortification Texts', unpublished manuscript

PFS   Persepolis Fortification Seal

PK   Palaikastro

PNA   K. Radner (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. i/1. *A* (Helsinki, 1998)

POAT   W. C. Gwaltney, Jr., *The Pennsylvania Old Assyrian Texts* (Cincinnati, 1983)

Prague   Texts I 426–I 847, ed. K. Hecket *et al.*, *Kappadokische Keilschrifttafeln aus den Sammlungen der Karlsuniversität Prague* (Prague, 1998)

RA   *Revue d'assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale*

RC   C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (Yale and New Haven, 1934)

RÉG   *Revue des études grecques*

RlA   E. Ebeling, B. Meissner, *et al.* (eds.), *Reallexicon der Assyriologie* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1932–)

SAA   State Archives of Assyria

SAAB   *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin*

Sack *AM*   R. H. Sack, *Amēl-Marduk 562–560 B.C.* (AOAT 4; Neukirchen and Vluyn, 1972)

SE   Seleucid Era

SEb   *Studi eblaiti*

SEG   *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*

SGDI   *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*

SIG   W. Dittenberger (ed.), *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*[3], vols. i–iv (Leipzig, 1915–24)

SMEA   *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici*

SpTU   Spätbabylonische Texte aus Uruk

Staatsverträge   H. Bengtson (ed.), *Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 700 bis 338 v. Chr.* (Munich, 1962)

TAM   *Tituli Asiae Minoris* (Vienna, 1901–)

TCL   Textes Cunéiformes, Louvre

TH   siglum of texts published in J. Friedrich *et al.*, *Die Inschriften vom Tell Halaf* (Vienna, 1940; repr. Osnabrück, 1967)

TIM 11   N. Postgate and B. Kh. Ismail, *Texts from Nineveh* ('Texts in the Iraq Museum, 11; n.d.)

TM   Tell Mardik

Tod   M. N. Tod (ed.), *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*, ii. *From 403 to 323 B.C.* (Oxford, 1948)

TPK	C. Michel and P. Garelli (1977), *Tablettes paléo-assyriennes de Kültepe*, i. (*Kt 90/k*) (Paris, 1977)
TuM	Texte und Materialien der Frau Prof. Hilprecht Collection of Babylonian Antiquities im Eigentum der Universität Jena (Leipzig)
U	inventory number of objects excavated at Ur
UET	Ur Excavations Texts
VAS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin
VAT	inventory number for tablets in the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin
VO	*Vicino Oriente*
VS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der königlichen [*later* stattlichen] Museen zu Berlin
WO	*Die Welt des Orients*
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient Gesellschaft
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*
YOS	*Yale Oriental Studies*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZRG	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*

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Sites of archives referred to in the volume

I

Ancient Archives and Concepts of Record-Keeping: An Introduction

MARIA BROSIUS

Our oldest archival records originate from the ancient Near East. Systems of archival record-keeping developed over several millennia in Mesopotamia before spreading to Egypt, the Mycenaean world, and the Persian empire, continuing through the hellenistic and Seleucid periods. In mainland Greece of the classical period, however, record-keeping appears to have developed differently. Roman administrative practices were subsequently drawn on traditions derived from both the Near East and Greece. Although extant archival materials are extensive and reflect a range of ancient societies, modern scholars know surprisingly little about the purpose, functioning, and management of these archives. The number of unanswered questions far exceeds those for which we can marshal a convincing explanation.

Few modern scholars have addressed the issues of archival traditions rigorously and in detail, or have dealt with questions of continuity across a comparable range of time, space, and political systems. The work of Ernst Posner (1972) is still unsurpassed in its attempt to discuss archival traditions of different civilizations. His contribution can only serve as a general introduction, while a detailed investigation of archival practices is still outstanding. The volume edited by Klaas Veenhof on cuneiform archives and libraries (Veenhof 1986a) offers detailed discussions on individual archives of the Near East, but does not provide a systematic approach to archival traditions and questions of continuity. Likewise, the contributors to *Archives before Writing* (Ferioli, Fiandra, *et al.*

1994) present and analyse the different documentation reflecting early archival practices, yet not under the aspect of a systematic approach to the material. Recently Olof Pedersén has published a useful survey of the archives and libraries of the Near East from 1500 to 300 BC, in which he offers an overview of the main finds and their physical location (Pedersén 1998). While individual studies may have drawn comparisons with other archives, pointing out similarities, a systematic investigation which addresses questions of formal aspects of creating, writing, and storing ancient documents, of copying and adapting archival systems across a wider geographical space and extensive period of time, is still outstanding.

The present volume addresses such questions regarding the systematic approach to the material and considers the implications of such an approach for identifying how archival practices were established, transmitted, modified, and adapted by other civilizations. By opening the discussion to such a wide-ranging field of documentation, we are able to make meaningful comparisons between the different systems and are able to define contrasting archival traditions.

To assist a systematic approach scholars must consider such issues as the following: What constitutes an ancient archive? What was the difference between an archive and a storeroom for documents? What was a 'fond d'archive' and was it different from an 'assemblage of documents'? Were they organized in different ways? Were documents stored in an archive organized more coherently than those kept in storerooms, or than those kept as collections? Were documents retrieved from an archive, but not from other storage spaces? Why, then, did they continue to be stored? Whether an archival room or a storage space, if documents were kept in a special room, they too must have been organized in a system which allowed someone to retrieve a particular record. What, then, was the distinction between them? When using the terms 'dead' and 'living' archives, do we understand these concepts from the perspective of the ancient society using archives or from the perspective of modern scholars? How does the terminology used by scholars in Near Eastern studies differ from that used by classical scholars for Greek and Roman 'archives'? Can this difference be validated and sustained?

In researching ancient archives and archival traditions, scholars hope to understand concepts of record-keeping in the ancient world. The present volume brings together the contributions of a workshop dedicated to addressing these questions. In response to the substantial quantities of extant evidence and its wide geographical and chronological distribution, the workshop focused on improving our understanding of ancient archival practices while enhancing their study through the development of new interdisciplinary methods of investigation. Another aim of the workshop was to unite scholars from different disciplines such as Assyriology, Aegean studies, archaeology, and ancient history. This was achieved through the investigation of a cross-section of archival evidence from the Near East, spanning the period from the third millennium BC to the Seleucid empire, while also including samples of the classical Greek and Graeco-Roman periods. We hope that this volume will provide a foundation for interdisciplinary discussion which will take scholarly research beyond the segregation of Near Eastern, Aegean, and classical disciplines.

All participants agreed that one issue requiring resolution was that of the differing interpretations of terminology. This demonstrates the difficulty facing modern scholars when trying to reconstruct concepts of documentation which date back 5,000 years, especially considering the patchiness of the evidence, as well as the fact that the documentation itself does not articulate the concepts. Yet if we aim to understand the past, and to develop the study of record-keeping or archival tradition as a historical discipline, it is essential that arguments are based on standardized terminology with consistent and widely adopted definitions. In his introduction to the volume of the 30th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Veenhof advocated the establishment of an '"Urkundenlehre" of cuneiform tablets' (Veenhof 1986*b*: 15). Considering that the same societies which used cuneiform tablets also used documents written on papyri and parchment, there must have been some similarities in the ways documents on these different media were stored and retrieved; we could extend this proposal and advocate the development of an '*Urkundenlehre* for ancient documents'.

The present contributions suggest ways of developing such an *Urkundenlehre* by offering a systematic discussion of their respective archival material. They aim to identify common factors in the storage and retrieval of ancient documents. General observations on writing materials and archival concepts for specific periods are made by Postgate, focusing on the terminology for archival records of the

Middle Assyrian period; by Millard, who discusses the problems of archival documents written in Aramaic; by Oelsner, whose contribution summarizes the characteristics of the archival documents of the hellenistic period; and by Davies in his survey of archives and archival records for classical Greece, highlighting the problems of interdisciplinary enquiry. Others use selected archives as case studies. Archi and Steinkeller respectively examine the archives of Ebla and Umma as examples of the earliest archival records. In order to compare Near Eastern archival traditions with those of other contemporary societies, scholars of Aegean studies discuss the evidence of Linear A and Linear B texts. Uchitel presents a technical study of the documentary evidence for Linear A, while Palaima examines Linear B documents, providing an extensive discussion of the archives complex at Pylos. Official archives of the first millennium BC are studied by Brosius, discussing texts from the Persepolis Fortification archive, and by Invernizzi, who examines the question of what seals and sealings can tell us about archives of the Seleucid period. Finally, Clarysse investigates procedures of record-keeping in Graeco-Roman Egypt, examining the practice of collecting interrelated documents which, as *tomoi synkollēsimoi*, were agglomerated to form a new document. Van Lerberghe, Veenhof, and Baker offer detailed examinations of 'private' archives, stressing the difficulty of distinguishing between 'public' and 'private' documents, a problem also addressed in Fales's extensive study of Neo-Assyrian documents.

Issues under investigation include the following:

- the meaning of the term 'archives' in ancient societies, Near Eastern, Mycenaean, and Greek, as opposed to the way we understand the term today;
- the process and reasoning for the selection of certain documents for archiving, considered by Fales and Baker in this volume;
- the reasons for documents to be transferred from older archives to new ones;
- why some archives were deliberately abandoned;
- the difference between 'public' and 'private' documents and 'public' and 'private' archives;
- the identification of any overriding concepts which identify common factors of archival documentation.

Ernst Posner defined the term 'archives' as a complex which in-

cluded 'all kinds of records', adding even more crucially that 'the ancient world did not even have the concept of an *archivio di deposito*, for nowhere are there to be found arrangements revealing an intention to differentiate administratively between current records and those no longer needed for the dispatch of business' (Posner 1972: 4–5). Recent advances in scholarship enable us to question this assumption.

The classical world tends to apply the term 'archives' to collections of legal documents and decrees. By contrast, ancient Near Eastern archives were concerned with the documentation, processing, and storage of predominantly economic texts. These include letter orders and receipts for goods, livestock, tax payments, and payments for labourers. In the context of Near Eastern archives it has been suggested (cf. Steinkeller, below, p. 40) that even legal texts can to a certain extent be regarded as receipts. Documenting and processing the transfer of goods was a complex undertaking which involved the repeated issuing of receipts, copies of receipts, and finally the transfer of information from individual tablets to the summary accounts that were compiled per week, month and/or year, or even years (as an example of how such a process could have worked, see again Steinkeller, below, p. 39). During this process some tablets became superfluous after serving their function, such as providing information necessary to prepare a summary-account tablet. These tablets might eventually be discarded or even destroyed. What is not known is how long tablets were stored in one place before perhaps being moved to another location within an archive complex in order to be processed, and finally, how much time passed before individual tablets could be discarded altogether. For example, some accounts from the Persepolis Fortification texts include comments that earlier accounts were finalized several years later (e.g. PF 1997). This effectively indicates that certain documents were stored for several years before their content was summarized. We also do not know whether the tablets were subsequently retained for a period to enable audits of the contents of the summary accounts themselves.

A dominant concern here for modern scholars is the fact that we know very little about why groups of texts were being stored, how long they were meant to be kept, and whether, at any stage, the person or institution maintaining an archive ever regarded it as 'complete' (cf. Veenhof, below, p. 105). Furthermore, the question

of what was being stored is complicated by the fact that archaeological finds depend somewhat on chance, since we rely on the area which has been excavated and the extent to which excavation can be carried out. Despite these difficulties, the evidence we have allows us to draw some general conclusions about systems of storage and retrieval, and patterns of record-keeping. Archives were not merely a storage place for 'all kinds of records'. Rather, it is evident that documents placed in an archive were specifically selected for retention. Documents must have been classified by different types, and a selection of these made to identify those for storage. Mario Fales raises this issue in his contribution by asking what was meant to be kept, a question which is difficult to approach for various reasons. Our ability to formulate an answer depends first on where and what kinds of documents we find on an archaeological site, second on the state of publication, and third on the difficulty among modern scholars of arriving at a common terminology not only within one discipline, but also across different disciplines. The problems inherent in early excavation practices, early excavation reports, the lack of interest among historians in economic texts, the failure to use archival documentation as an aid to understand the history of a site and a region, and the failure to see interconnections between different sites and their archives are well recognized (cf. Posner 1972: 6). A further problem, less excusable than those caused by the ignorance which is in part due to lack of experience among practitioners in a new discipline, is the state of publication of these documents. It remains alarming that the publication of the archives can depend on the whim of scholars who compromise scholarly research and academic discussion by the passive hoarding of material (cf. Veenhof 1986*b*: 35).

Various contributors, particularly Palaima, Fales, and Baker, address fundamental questions about the definition and clarification of terminology related to ancient archives. In the 1980s Veenhof proposed a definition of an archive as a collection or repository of records 'preserved for their historical value and stored separately', and a 'total of records accumulated during the time a particular task was performed by an institution or person' (Veenhof 1986*b*: 7). In the present volume Palaima argues that an archive 'stresses the historical value of stored records and the process of intentional transference of records from the contexts in which their information was originally valid to a different environment for long-term

preservation' (below, p. 169). Other factors influencing the length of time archives were retained included how long the information contained in the records was considered to be useful to the organization or individual by whom it was created (Palaima, below, p. 170). We are also trying to understand the rationale behind the retention of some documents, i.e. the predetermined concept, following specific rules, which allowed later use of documents for an internal need, even though they were not necessarily collected with a view to permanent conservation (cf. Fissiore 1994: 345; Palaima, below, pp. 169–70). Fales asks how we can actually determine what was an archive and what was simply an unintentional accumulation of documents, and goes on to distinguish between 'living', 'dead', and 'silent' archives. 'Living' archives are those found *in situ*, with an undisturbed occupational level, 'dead' archives are those which were found *in situ*, but which have been disturbed, and 'silent' archives are those whose context is irretrievable (Fales, below, p. 197). In addition, Archi argues that an archive must have been something that those responsible for its creation and maintenance regarded as containing a complete set of documents and that such completeness may have depended upon the retention of documents over a fixed period of time (below, p. 19). Others speak of 'assemblages' of documents (e.g. Steinkeller) to describe this context. In Uchitel's view the term 'administrative archives' is less precise than 'economic archives' (below, p. 139).

These definitions of 'archives' are not applied uniformly among Assyriologists. Veenhof uses the term 'dead' archive to refer to texts which were stored separately in ancient times because they were no longer needed in the 'living' archive (below, p. 105). In her discussion of the documents of the Egibi archive, Baker treats the corpus of documents as a 'living' archive, but since these texts were recovered by illicit excavations, they would be classed as 'silent' in Fales's understanding of the terminology. Van Lerberghe uses yet another term when speaking of an 'active' archive in Tell ed-Dēr, even though this archive was abandoned in antiquity (below, p. 59).

The underlying problem remains how to standardize our terminology most accurately. Should we use terminology which reflects the way in which modern scholarship and modern record-keeping practices view these documents, or should we attempt to recast the terms from the point of view of the institution in the ancient society

which created and kept the archive? In other words, do we apply a terminology which considers a set of documents from the viewpoint of the state of excavation, or do we look at the information from the point of view of the contemporary record-keeper(s) of the ancient society who had installed and used a system of archiving, storing, and discarding documents?

It seems to me that a historical investigation of archival documents is best served if we try to understand the evidence within its own historical context, rather than from a modern perspective. If we were to use the terminology in the way Fales suggests, it would be harder for us to understand how archives and storerooms were regarded and treated in their own historical period. Knowing whether an archive was a 'dead' or a 'living/working' archive is essential if we are to interpret the context of the material it contains. In my view there could have been no 'dead' archive in antiquity itself. According to Veenhof's definition, these would have been the storeroom(s) of an archive complex, but, as has been pointed out, tablets were moved from one 'archive' to another. This implies that neither the main archive room nor the storeroom(s) were ever considered to be static. The main or central archive of a palace or temple, or even of a private business or household, must have been a room undergoing frequent changes. Equally, a room in which documents were stored which were no longer needed must have undergone similar changes in the documents it held. Thus, contrary to the assertion that contemporaries must have regarded an archive as complete, it might be better to regard an archive as a room in which documents considered as important to the past and ongoing business of the institution were stored. These were removed from or added to the archive according to the development of affairs.

Returning to the question 'what is an archive?', we first need to clarify whether 'archive' refers to one main room in which documents were stored, or in fact means an 'archive complex', in the way Palaima refers to the archive rooms of Pylos. Second, we need to ask whether an archive was ever 'complete' in the sense in which Veenhof speaks of a 'dead' archive, i.e. an archive from which no tablets were taken and to which no others were added. There will have been a main archive room within a set of rooms in a building or complex of buildings which served the purpose of storing records. Documents stored there were actively consulted for a restricted period of time. The material documenting these holdings

must have been regularly updated, such as when tablets were added to the archive, or when others were discarded. These archival rooms were therefore subject to constant change. Perhaps the term 'active' or 'working' archive is best equipped to express the fact that an archive was in constant use during its lifetime. By applying a more flexible meaning to the term 'archives', expressions such as 'fonds d'archives' (i.e. collections of documents accumulated by a person or an institution on a specific issue for a limited time—cf. Veenhof 1986*b*: 7), and 'assemblages of documents' become synonyms. Furthermore, within such assemblages there existed 'dossiers', sets of documents grouped together through a common subject matter.

Greek archives seem to contrast with the Near Eastern and Mycenaean definition of archives. The difference is mainly due to the fact that the term 'archives' here refers to public buildings controlled by the state, e.g. by the council or the *dēmos*. Documents stored in these 'public record offices' included official legal texts, but also private contracts and records of loans, gifts, and liberation of slaves (Posner 1972: 95). As Davies suggests, the copying or display of private transactions might have been due to the interest of private individuals (estate owners, ex-slaves) who might require the support of the state, or may have been prescribed by the state for tax purposes (Davies, below, p. 332). Thus, a Greek public archive included private documents as a matter of course. However, it is worthy of note that the kind of private documents stored in a public space were those concerned with finance and taxation, and therefore the question may be asked whether they were stored in these locations because they were the concern of the state. This practice also does not exclude the possibility that there were other copies of these private documents, which individual citizens kept in their own 'private' archives.

We need to distinguish clearly between the storing of records in a public archive and their permanent public display on stone in the polis (cf. Posner 1972: 97). It was decided that certain documents were essential to the political life of the polis, and these were stored in the public archive. Accordingly, different types of material were chosen on which to write the texts, such as whitened boards or papyrus. The choice of media used to record these documents may have reflected contemporary views on how long the texts should remain accessible, since the choice of writing material related, even if only implicitly, to the strategy for retaining or disposing of a

document. Of these documents, some were copied on stone for public display, either for consultation or for propaganda (cf. Davies, below).

However, it must first be noted that the modern definition of what constitutes an archive in classical Greece is determined by the fact that no economic texts have survived from this period. If they had, it is feasible to suggest that traders, timber merchants, shipbuilders, bankers would have kept archives in their houses to keep track of incoming and outgoing goods, of outstanding bills and loans. These documents may no longer exist, but it does not mean they were never there. The narrow definition given to ancient Greek archives by modern scholars is due (from a Near Eastern view) to the limited types of sources. Decrees and legal texts intended for the public would in Near Eastern terminology be classified as library material. Near Eastern libraries stored exactly this type of document, but this did not exclude the public display of some of these legal documents on stone, as it did in Greece. It can subsequently be observed that even if their contents differ, the Greek and Near Eastern definitions of an 'archive' are not contradictory in their description of archives as 'assemblages of documents retained systematically for some reason' (Davies, below, p. 324) and dossiers as 'groups of documents on a single theme' (Davies, ibid.).

The following definition can be offered for standardization. Archives are first a physical space within a public space (palace or temple complex, public archive) or within a private building or private complex of buildings, and second a collection of stored documents. The building which housed archival records was a 'house of tablets', while an archival room in the private sphere was a guarded place (Akk. *maṣṣartum*) or simply a storeroom (Akk. *huršum*). A collection of records reflects a deliberate choice or selection of documents. These documents cover a certain period of time, ranging from the number of reigning years of a king to several generations of a business family. For the duration of storage, distinctions were made between longer and shorter periods of storage, and these were physically expressed by housing documents in different archival rooms. A certain flexibility existed in the allocation of documents between these rooms, reflecting the process of administering a document and whether it was likely to be required for regular immediate access or more irregular and long-term retrieval. Archive complexes could contain older documents from

different archives either because of their value for record-keeping purposes, or because of their historical significance. Most documents kept in archival complexes were kept for a specific duration of time, covering several years or even generations. In the case of economic archives, their permanent storage was not envisaged or required. In this regard, archival documents differ from those of libraries, which, being collections of legal, literary, and historical texts, must have been maintained with a sense of historical continuity and permanency.

The archive complexes in which documents were collected, processed, and stored fall into two groups: public and private. When applying these terms to Near Eastern archives, the distinction seems clear enough: a palace or temple constitutes a public archive complex, whereas private businesses set up their own archival rooms. Yet the distinction between public and private documents and their storage is not always clear-cut, and this is a phenomenon Near Eastern scholars share with their classical colleagues. While public and private archive complexes can be clearly distinguished, the storage of private documents in public archives as well as the storage of seemingly public documents in private archives is somewhat surprising. Is the distinction between public and private archives really valid for the ancient world (cf. Veenhof 1986*b*: 10–11)? It should also be added that no archives were really 'public' in the modern sense of the term. Ancient public archives were really those that belonged to the administration of the state and were the private archives of the kings, priests, or other political authorities.

The phenomenon of private documents deposited in public spaces, and (more surprisingly) vice versa, seems to be a practice which can be found throughout the history of record-keeping. For example, the 2,000 tablets from the 'private house' in Tell ed-Dēr include the private documents of the family of Ur-Utu, as well as official documents related to the personnel and the religious rites of the Annunītum temple (Van Lerberghe, below, p. 61). Likewise, there is evidence among the documents of the traders of the commercial district of Kaniš that official letters (or copies thereof) were kept in private archives (Veenhof, below, p. 81). Veenhof suggests that their presence might be due to the fact that the owner of such official letters may have played an official role within the *kārum* organization. For the Neo-Babylonian period Fales remarks that, as in the case of documents from Nimrud, public buildings would also

accommodate the individual business deeds of personnel associated with the palace and the city (below, p. 210). Since it is still difficult for us to understand the reasoning behind this, Fales suggests that either this was a condition of employment for some officials, or else some members of the palace administration chose to keep records in their official work quarters (below, p. 211). As has been previously observed, Greek public archives could similarly house private documents (Davies, below, pp. 330–1).

Since the point of an archive was to provide access to documents, the material must have been stored in such a way as to allow those consulting the archive to retrieve that information according to some practical rationale. Archives were kept in cities, in the public sphere of palaces and temples and in the private realm of traders, bankers, and families. No doubt they were each arranged to meet the individual requirements and practical applications of the institution or individual who created them. It is less likely, however, that each archive, from the third millennium onwards, individually created its own rules for document design, i.e. the shape of the tablet and the layout of the text documented on it, for the administrative processes involved in producing a chain of documentation from letter orders to receipts and copies, to weekly, monthly, and finally annual accounts. The high standard of organization detectable in even the earliest archives of the third millennium BC allows us to argue that archival record-keeping was done according to conventions which were already well established and widely accepted. By the third millennium BC record-keeping had gone beyond an experimental stage of trial and error, and had become a professional system of documentation. If this argument can be sustained for the Near Eastern archives across Mesopotamia, a tradition of archival conventions must have existed.

There will also have been conventions for which documents were sealed or not, and where the seal was to be applied on the tablet. The process of documentation and the systems of storage and retrieval are enormously complex, and it is logical to assume that a system employed in the first archives was adapted by other contemporary institutions requiring archives, that this system evolved from there, and that a tradition or traditions of archival record-keeping thus emerged.

So, can we identify any concepts of archival traditions? Are there any common features which are shared between record-keeping institutions over centuries? How can we trace such a tradition or traditions? Certain factors already give a general indication.

1. Adaptation of Terminology and Language

Archival record-keeping was modelled on earlier concepts. Thus, the scribes of the archives in Ebla modelled their documents on Sumerian predecessors (Archi), and developed the system to fit their own requirements. The principal terminology used to describe different kinds of tablets remained in use over the next millennia (Archi, Steinkeller), and was refined in the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods (Postgate, Baker). Aramaic documents influenced both Neo-Assyrian and Persian archival terminology, and were influenced by them in return (Millard). The Neo-Babylonian system continued to be used in the hellenistic and Seleucid periods (Oelsner, Invernizzi), while the Persians adopted the archival practices of Elam, including the use of Elamite as the script for economic texts (Brosius), which equally continued through the Seleucid period.

2. Document Types and Shapes

The relationship between the shape of a tablet and its contents is recognizable. Among the tablets from Ebla, particular shapes of documents referring to fabrics, of those dealing with expense, and of income tablets can be identified (the latter two develop further shapes). Van Lerberghe's reinvestigation of the 485 tablets found in room 17 allowed him to conclude that tablets were stored according to their shape and contents; one archival room, room 22, seems to have held categorized tablets, including the debt contracts written on *zeḫpum*-shaped tablets. The Linear B tablets from Knossos likewise allow a grouping of texts according to the differently shaped tablets. According to Palaima, the formatting of the texts seems to have remained the same for at least 200 years. In the case of the Neo-Babylonian tablets from the Egibi archive Baker argues that tablet shape alone does not suffice to distinguish the type of contract, but that sealed tablets can be distinguished by their shape, and that textual markers, duplicates, and formulae all have a bearing on

record-keeping. As an investigation of the account and journal texts from the Persepolis Fortification tablets shows, a clear relationship existed between the shape of the tablet and the textual contents, which in turn provides clues for the way these tablets must have been stored.

3. Text Formulae

Apart from the relationship between the tablet shape and its contents, textual markers come to facilitate the recognition of types of documents. Steinkeller describes the receipt tablets as using certain verbal forms, and points out that the receipt tablets from Umma were sealed. He furthermore identifies a clear layout in the balanced accounts. For the Neo-Babylonian practice these formulae are pointed out by Postgate and receive a detailed investigation by Baker. In continuation of these conventions, Oelsner points out the similar practices in documents of the hellenistic period, using recognized formulae. Finally, Invernizzi states that practices from the Neo-Assyrian period were adapted in the Seleucid period; clay sealings were used as much as before, but they were now applied to papyri and parchment.

4. Procedures of Record-Keeping

Economic tablets recorded in archival complexes refer to matters which were conducted outside the institution responsible for creating the record itself (Steinkeller). This statement seems to apply to the archival practices of the third millennium BC and is equally applicable throughout later periods. The majority of documents are records of receipts and deliveries. Distinctions were made by subject matter (Archi, Steinkeller, Brosius), such as grain, wool, fruit, cattle, metal, labour payments, but the system was probably interconnected. The contents of individual receipts were eventually transferred to weekly, monthly, and annual accounts, a practice which can be traced from the earliest records (Archi) to those from the first millennium BC. Within the history of record-keeping, the production of multiple copies is well attested. Clearly, tablets were stored according to different types and labelled containers were

marked to denote the 'dossiers' they contained. The practice is in place in Ebla and in Kaniš, where, according to Veenhof, a classification of tablets and their systematic storage were practised, with different types of records and groups of documents being stored separately (below, pp. 101–2), while *bullae* labelled sets of stored documents in containers. The storage of tablets could last for several years, but was always subject to review (Steinkeller). Equally, a systematic arrangement and filing, including the use of containers for tablets, were well in place in the archive complex of Pylos (Palaima). The papyri used in the Graeco-Roman period as *tomoi synkollēsimoi*, though a different physical medium, represented a filing system in which already existing interrelated documents were brought together to form a new whole—a feature which may be compared with the dossiers of Near Eastern tablets and Greek documents.

Ancient archives share more characteristics with modern archives than we might at first suspect. Like their modern counterparts, they contain documents that record commercial transactions. The objective in creating these archives was to provide a level of accountability for the business processes and activities of organizations and states. As with modern archives, ancient record-keepers developed retention and disposal strategies to ensure that the appropriate information was kept for as long as it was necessary to provide documentation for particular transactions. Modern record-keepers recognize that in order to be able to interpret individual records it is essential to understand the context of their creation and storage. Many of our difficulties with ancient archives, such as the matter of deciding whether or not an assemblage of documents was a 'dead' or a 'living' archive, derive from our inability to ascertain the context of archival material independently of the records themselves.

We may recognize from a modern perspective the complexities of taking an assemblage of records and explaining why they were created and how they were stored. Frequently, in the case of ancient archives we use the information contained in documents to allow us to say things about ancient society that we would otherwise be unable to say. Generally, in so doing we are taking particular records and using them without an understanding of the archival practices that they reflect. If we are to achieve a richer understanding of the documents themselves and the society that created them, we need

to develop a discipline of archival studies, along with methods to provide a context for ancient archives. This volume attempts to begin this process.

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2

Archival Record-Keeping at Ebla 2400–2350 BC

ALFONSO ARCHI

The city of Ebla, ancient Tell Mardikh, lies *c.*60 km. south of Aleppo. The area is peripheral to the region where cuneiform writing began at the end of the fourth millennium BC, when it was used by several palace administrations. The documents from the central archive of the royal palace of Ebla cover a period of *c.*40 years, corresponding to the reigns of the last two kings of the dynasty, Irkab-Damu and Išar-Damu. It is likely that the archive was already in use at the time of Irkab-Damu because the entire series of monthly and yearly documents from this period were kept there. About 45 tablets dated to the reign of Igriš-Halab, the antepenultimate king, which register the delivery (*mu*-DU) of silver and clothes to the palace by the highest officials (*lugal-lugal*), were transferred from a previous archive. Documents of different typologies of that period are missing.

The archive was placed in a room measuring 5.10 m. × 3.55 m. (L. 2769) (Figure 2.1: C). It had been built under the eastern portico of a large unroofed hall measuring *c.*40 m. × 50 m., situated west of the acropolis. A podium made of mudbricks, on which the royal throne was placed, identified the function of this room as the audience hall. It was reached by a flight of stairs, built inside a square tower in the north-east corner of the hall. Thus, the archive was directly connected to the audience hall, and it is possible that the king met his officials in charge of the administration here. The same layout is found in the royal palaces of Mari and Ugarit, dated to the Midde and Late Bronze periods

Note. For bibliography see p. 35.

A: a lot of a few lenticular tablets
B: archive concerning the distribution
   of cereals
C: central archive
D: a lot of tablets of various genres
E: tablets concerning incomes of barley and livestock
F: a lot of c.20 tablets taken from the central archive during
   the destruction of the Palace
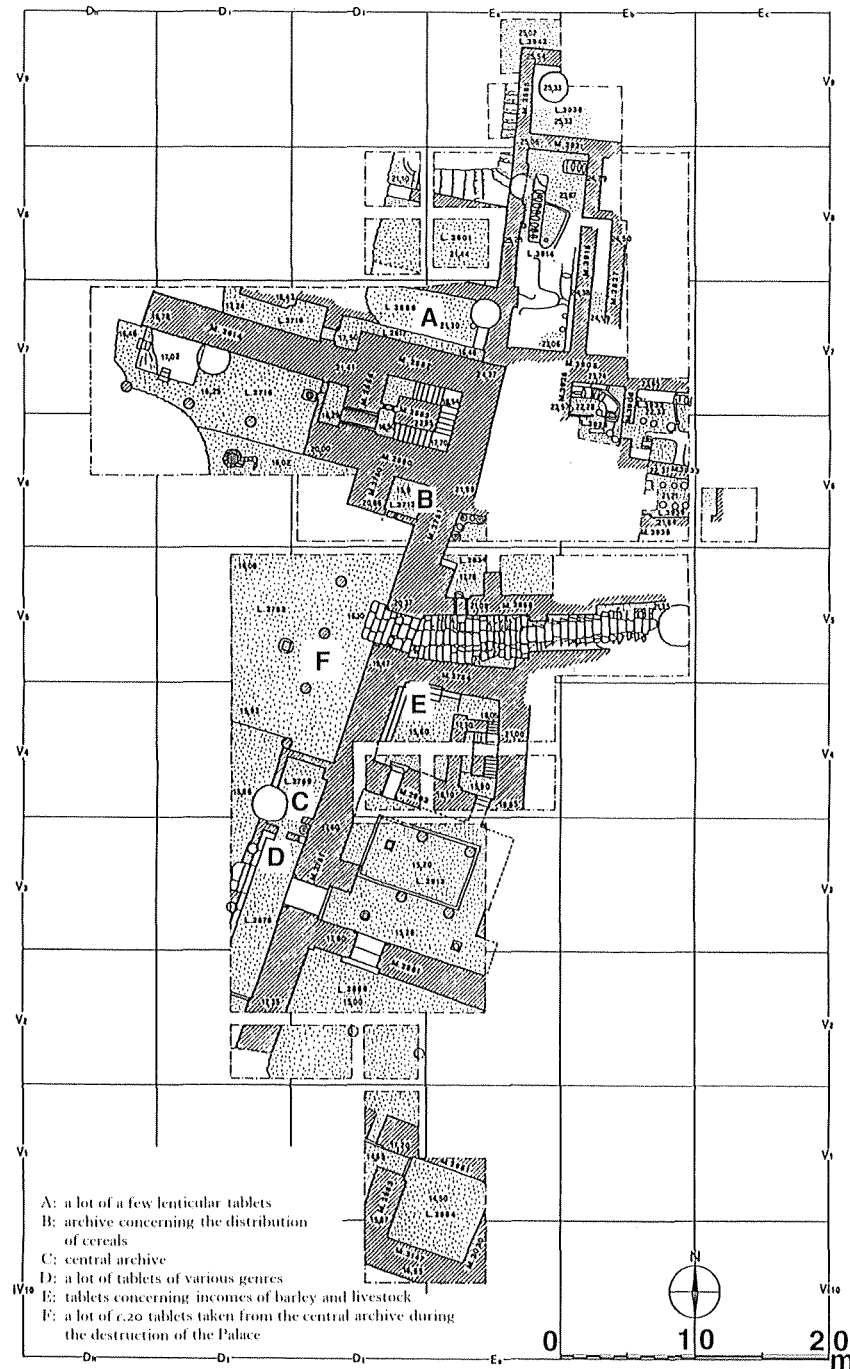
FIG. 2.1. The findspots of the Ebla tablets

respectively.[1] In Mari and Ugarit these archives were mostly re-served for chancery documents, such as the correspondence with officials who administered the centres of the kingdom, messengers' reports, and correspondence with other kings. Only about 50 documents of this kind, letters to and from officials, royal ordinances, and diplomatic agreements, were kept in the main archive of Ebla. In a vestibule (L. 2875; Figure 2.1: D) in front of the archive 30 chancery documents dated to the very late period of the city were found among 80 tablets. Evidently this kind of document underwent a selection process before being stored in the main archive of Ebla, while preference was given to administrative documentation.[2]

Three administrative sectors are more or less completely preserved. They concern the distribution (è) of textiles, the distribution of objects in silver and gold, and the delivery of textiles and metals. The sectors allow us to understand how the people in charge of the administration developed their own method of record-keeping. Other activities, even such a primary one as agricultural production, are only partially documented.

One of the most ancient documents dated to Igriš-Halab, TM. 77. G. 23 + 80. G. 207, preserves some totals of goods concerning the reign of King Adub-Damu. This implies that writing might have been introduced in Ebla via Mari during the reign of Igriš-Halab, or immediately before 2400 BC. Nevertheless, in later periods Eblaite scribes also used to go to Mari in order to copy difficult texts such as the Sumerian lexical lists. Two colophons written by Tira-Il, who was active during the reign of Irkab-Damu, run as follows: '*in ud dumu-nita-dumu-nita e,, áš-du Ma-rí^{ki}* "Tira-Il the scribe, being Ibdur-išar the expert of the tablets; when the young scribes came up from Mari' (Archi 1992: 29).

A complicated form of writing such as the cuneiform script meant that the Eblaite scribes required knowledge of Sumerian terms. Therefore they copied a list of signs together with their pronunciation (MEE 3. 52+), as well as several Sumerian lexical lists which precisely reproduced the features of the Mesopotamian originals. These features, including palaeography, the form of the tablet, the

[1] For Mari see Durand (1985), 44–8. For Ugarit see Courtois (1979), 1222–31. The 'international archive' ('archive sud') was found in rooms 68 and 69, close to court V. The legal documents ('archives centrales') were found between courts IV and VI, while the administrative archives ('archives est') were close to an entrance of the royal palace.
[2] On the archives see Archi (1986; 1996a); Matthiae (1986).

same number of cases for each column, and the reverse containing only the colophon, seem to go back to the period of Abū Salābīkh (2550–2500 BC) or even Fāra (2600–2550 BC). For some lists, however, the scribes also compiled cursive copies: small tablets written on both the obverse and the reverse, with much smaller cases.

Another kind of lexical text groups the words according to the acrographic system, a principle already attested at Abū Salābīkh. Again, Eblaite scribes probably copied Mesopotamian models. However, they also created their own lists, generally using large tablets with small writing. One of these lists, TM. 75. G. 2422+, which contained 1,204 words, was provided with Eblaite equivalents. It is the first vocabulary in the history of mankind known to us, preserved in four main documents—an extraordinary achievement by the scribes of Ebla.[3]

To date no lexical texts have been found in Mari. The few dozen administrative documents concerning registrations of goods for short periods provide no information on the archival practices of that centre. They are small in size, like most of the Mesopotamian administrative tablets of that time, slightly wider than they are high, flat on the obverse and convex on the reverse, and have rounded edges.[4]

At Ebla no annual and monthly accounts of any administrative sector are attested for the early beginning of its central archive; they were, therefore, a creation of the scribes of that school, including the form chosen for each kind of documentation. The small to medium-sized tablets are slightly broader than high, flat on the obverse, convex on the reverse, and with rounded edges. They remained in use mostly for documents concerning the deliveries, or incoming goods (*mu*-DU), of the palace, both annual and occasional in character, while the lenticular shape was not related to any documentary typology.

The Sumerian terminology had an important influence on the conceptualization of administrative operations, but probably not on

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[3] The Eblaite scribes also play an innovative role in regard to the school texts. A preliminary edition of the monolingual and bilingual lexical texts is given by Pettinato (1981; 1982). For a general presentation of the lexical lists see Archi (1992).

[4] Charpin (1987; 1990). It is not possible to establish a synchronism between the tablets from Ebla and those from Mari. The writing on some of the Mari tablets looks more regular (cf. Charpin 1987: nos. 2, 8, 23, 25), and therefore closer to the administrative tablets from Abū Salābīkh. The Tell Beydar tablets follow a different administrative tradition: see Ismail, Sallaberger, Talon, and Van Lerberghe (1996).

the creation of new mental categories. It defines basic movements of goods such as *níg-ba* 'gift', *mu*-DU 'delivery', *è* 'expenditure' (terms which can be used for classifying groups of documents), *i/in-na-sum* 'has/have given', *šu-ba₄-ti* 'has/have received', *šu-mu-'tag₄'* 'has/have consigned', *še-ba* 'ration', *lul-gu-ag* 'as a substitute (for)'; *níg-kaskal* 'victuals', *níg-sa₁₀* 'value, price', and *šu-bal-ag* 'exchange, value'. Ideological concerns could in some way condition the use of this terminology. The goods which Ebla was compelled to give to Mari were called 'delivery' at Mari, while the Eblaite administration preferred to define them as 'gifts'.

Most of these expressions remain in use for more than 2,000 years in all the provinces where cuneiform writing was adopted. All the administrative centres had the same basic language, a much more remarkable phenomenon than the influence exerted by the Italian bankers of the fifteenth century on banking practice. Document typologies, however, did not reach Ebla; land-purchase texts, which are well attested in the pre-Sargonic period (before *c*.2350 BC), are absent, while other types of administrative documents had not yet received a distinctive standard formula.

Regarding the goods, each administration has its particular way of keeping its usually rather schematic registrations. The Ebla documents give the names of the people receiving or giving the goods, but rarely their title or function. A keyword qualifying the transfer of the goods is often added; a terse and unformalized motivation is sometimes given which, in several cases, can be understood only with the help of parallel passages. These data can lead to an understanding of the movements of goods and to an estimate of the level of production only if they can be recovered from documents covering a certain period of time. During the office of the minister Arrukum (*c*.2390–2386 BC) Eblaite administration first began to draw up statements of this kind, which received a particular form for each administrative sector.

The texts of Ebla are not dated according to the regnal years of a king.[5] Moreover, except for six documents, the kings are referred to only by their title, never mentioned by name. In contrast, the names of the ministers or viziers who headed the administration are given, allowing a rough chronological order of the documents. Thus it can be established that Arrukum was minister for four to five years during the reign of Irkab-Damu. Shortly before the king's

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[5] A possible exception is a small group of delivery texts: see below, p. 25.

death, Ibrium succeeded him as minister, and stayed in office for 18 years. Then his son Ibbi-Zikir took office for *c.*17 years until Ebla was destroyed (*c.*2350).
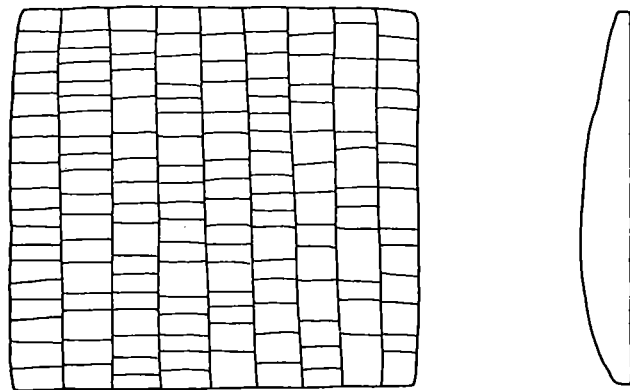

FIG. 2.2. Format of the monthly account of distributions of textiles

The distribution of fabrics, the most important manufacturing production controlled by the palace, was registered in monthly accounts. These are tablets of about 16–18 cm. per side, and are slightly wider than high, 2.5–4 cm. thick, with rectangular edges, flat obverse, and convex reverse (Figure 2.2). This type of tablet remained unchanged until the archive ceased to exist. By this time the tablet size had increased to 21 cm. per side because of Ebla's growing economic range during the mandate of Ibbi-Zikir. As these tablets are dated only according to the month, the keepers of the archive must have been able to establish the year to which they belonged only in an approximate way, basing themselves on the sequence in which the tablets were placed on the shelves. Today, this order having been lost, it is only possible to classify these texts first according to the name of the minister, and then, for a more precise dating of the text, on a prosopographic basis. We can assign 56 monthly documents to Arrukum, covering almost 5 years, 173 to Ibrium (for approximately 14 years and 5 months), and 275 to Ibbi-Zikir (for 22 years and 11 months). A further 36 tablets of this genre, covering *c.*3 years, cannot be dated to either Ibrium or Ibbi-Zikir. At least two dozen other documents can be added on the basis of the fragmentary material.[6] The fact that such a large

6 For this type of document see ARET 2. 1–17 and ARET 4.

number of tablets are attributed to Ibbi-Zikir can be explained by intercalary months, and the consideration that the amount of goods in circulation for that last period sometimes needed more than one document for a month. However, no sure indication of the practice of manifold documents for a month has been detected hitherto.

The annual documents concerning payments made in silver and gold—mostly in the form of objects—or copper evaluated in silver were drawn up first under Arrukum, to whom four of them are to be dated. These tablets, with an enlarged shape of about 20 cm. per side, copy the shape of the tablets concerning the deliveries to the palace, a form which ultimately derives from a Mesopotamian model. At the end of two of these texts it is noted that the 'document (concerns) the expenses of the second/third year', a notation referring perhaps to the mandate of the minister. No other element refers to the annual character of the text.[7]
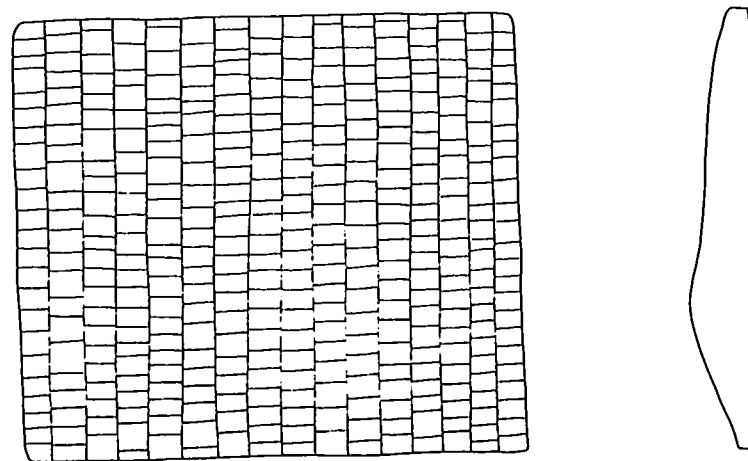
FIG. 2.3. Format of the annual account of distributions of precious metals

Under the minister Ibrium this type of document changed its inner and outer morphology. The edges are squared off and the maximum point of convexity is at a point two-thirds down on the reverse (Figure 2.3). Furthermore, the two opening registrations concern 1 mina of silver (470 gr.) 'for the silver head of the god Kura'—

7 The document of the second year is MEE 10. 23 (this edition needs to be collated); that of the fourth year is ARET 1. 45+3. 440+.

apparently for a ritual of annual renewal of the statue devoted to the major god of the city—and several minas to two priestesses of the god Idabal, whose sanctuaries were spread all around Ebla. Several more registrations refer to other annual rites. The final notation is a kind of balance: 'x minas of silver expended, x minas of silver present in the treasury | at the palace [al_6-gál é-siki | é-gal]'. With an increased volume of delivered goods, the tablets became as large as 37 cm. wide and 32 cm. high in the last years of Eblaite administration. These tablets do not present a progressive number which allows a chronological order. Only in rare cases, such as the death of the king's mother, is an event registered as 'year name', but this is of little assistance since it has no correlation with other documents. In such a case the scribes could determine the year to which these documents referred only on the basis of the tablets' position in the archive. For us only prosopographic analysis is left as an aid for reconstruction. Of these annual documents 18 are attributed to Ibrium and 15 to Ibbi-Zikir.[8]
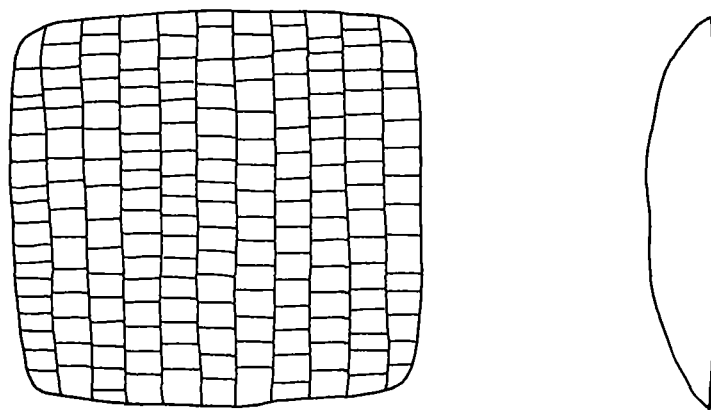
FIG. 2.4. Format of the annual account concerning incomes (*mu*-DU)

The traditionally shaped tablets of medium size (flat on the obverse, convex on the reverse, and with rounded edges) were reserved for documents concerning incomes (Figure 2.4; Archi 2000). Most of these deliveries were conveyed to the palace by the major of-

[8] An annual account dated to Ibrium is MEE 7. 34 (to which some small fragments can be added); two are the accounts of Ibbi-Zikir published to date: MEE 10. 26 and ARET 8. 534+537+.

ficials of the state, called 'lords' (Sum. *lugal*, Eblaite *bâlum*). The 45 smaller tablets of this kind which have to be dated to the reign of king Igriš-Halab, or perhaps even to the first years of Irkab-Damu's reign, register rather modest amounts of silver or clothes delivered by 15–20 'lords' for some particular occasions or perhaps on a monthly basis; some others are annual and are dated with the notation: *mu* . . . 'year . . .', such as the contemporary tablets of Lagaš, referring apparently to the regnal years of a king.

Two people, Darmia and Tir, stand out among all the other officials during this period as conveying far more goods than the others. In four documents Arrukum replaces Tir;[9] thus they concern the four years during which he acted as minister under Irkab-Damu. Arrukum's successor, Ibrium, already appears in the lists of the period of Tir. Yet according to the documents of Arrukum, it seems that Ibrium had not previously held an important position. His appointment as minister seems to have marked a break with the previous administration, because most of the lords were changed.

Under Ibrium, to whom 18 tablets are attributed, the annual document followed a scheme in four sections: the deliveries of the minister (which greatly surpassed all the others put together), the deliveries of the lords, the deliveries of the city-states under the hegemony of Ebla, and the total number of the goods.[10] The 13 documents of Ibbi-Zikir kept the same order, but now the third section divides the deliveries made by the city-states into the first and the second half of the year. The deliveries of Ibbi-Zikir were twice as many as those of Ibrium, and consequently his documents also have a larger size than those of the former minister.[11] Neither the tablets of Ibrium nor those of Ibbi-Zikir are dated.

While the documentation concerning the three types of text described above can be considered as practically complete—assuming that there have been only a few accidental losses—other groups are not sufficiently characterized and contain large gaps.

More than 60 lenticular tablets concern textile production. Very few of them register large numbers, and they seem to give the totals of clothes *tag₄* 'deposited' for one or two years *al₆-gál é-siki* 'in the

[9] One of the annual *mu*-DU documents of Arrukum is MEE 2. 50+ARET 3. 52.
[10] Two annual *mu*-DU texts of Ibrium are published: ARET 2. 13 and MEE 2. 1.
[11] An annual *mu*-DU document of Ibbi-Zikir is ARET 8. 528.

house of the wool', i.e. in the storehouses.[12] Other lenticular tablets contain perhaps single registrations which had to be transferred to the monthly accounts of deliveries, but we are not sure even of that because the texts are so terse.[13] In fact, there are no balanced accounts concerning clothing production. In front of the roughly 550 monthly documents registering clothing distribution for about 40 years, there are simply the annual accounts concerning the deliveries of metals and clothes to the palace. Because we are not able to classify the monthly accounts by year, it is not possible to verify whether all the clothes production of the palace was registered in the delivery texts.

Of the roughly 380 lenticular tablets concerning metallurgical production, many refer to single registrations to be transferred to the annual accounts. Another 300 tablets of medium to large size register distributions of daggers, plates in precious metals, and similar goods. They cannot be evaluated within the economic system because most of them are not provided with any chronological data. About 50 tablets list towns or villages and inventories of goods of manufactories, again without any administrative justification, so that they give the idea of having been collected at random.

While the circulation of manufactured goods is well documented, agricultural production appears to have been registered in a rather desultory way. This remains inexplicable, especially considering the fact that in this case the records for the current year were kept in a room (L. 2764) of an inner section of the palace (Figure 2.1: E) rather than in the central archive, at least during the last period of the city. More than 20 tablets list fields located in the territory of several villages in the possession of the royal family, the minister, and other officials. About half of these cadastres have to be dated to the mandate of the minister Arrukum, which means that most of the last 35 years are not documented. Less than a dozen small tablets with the total number of sheep collected yearly for the palace are also of that period. There is, moreover, a single annual account[14] concerning the income of cereals, without any reference to a date or a personal name.

A central archive should also store annual accounts for agricul-

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[12] See e.g. ARET 1. 33–7.
[13] Some of these tablets are published in ARET 7; the other lenticular and small-sized tablets concerning metallurgical production will be collected in a volume in preparation.   [14] See below, pp. 31–2.

tural production, but in this case we have several dozen tablets registering amounts of barley and head of sheep and cattle related to a village or a collector, without any further administrative annotation. It is therefore impossible to say whether the goods were delivered to the palace or distributed to people belonging to the palace organization. A prosopographic study is of little assistance because the documents contain few personal names; moreover, agricultural administration was kept apart from the other sectors.

It seems clear that the Eblaite administration did not consider it necessary to adopt general principles which applied to all of its branches. For clothing and metallurgic production each single item was registered in general accounts using previous documentation which was later destroyed or cancelled.[15] Because of the large number of registrations of clothing distributions, monthly accounts were used for this sector, without collecting the sums in a yearly document—while for metal distributions a large tablet was enough to record a whole year. The deliveries of both kinds of goods were registered together in one yearly account. Only during Ibbi-Zikir's office was a balance between the amount of silver remaining in the treasury and the amount expended reported at the end of yearly accounts. A few small tablets with high totals, drawn up in the last period of the archives, may have registered the textile production deposited for one year in the storerooms (cf. n. 10 above).

The situation for primary production is quite different. Several texts concerning deliveries to the palace were stored in the central archive, but there was only one annual account for cereals, which exists in two copies. The totals of sheep collected on behalf of the palace concern, inexplicably, only the first ten years of the archive.

Although these goods were intended for actual use, it appears that it was considered unnecessary to preserve the annual accounts in which they had been recorded.[16] However, one could easily concede that in antiquity itself it seemed proper for an administration to keep its own documentation, without considering when and why it could be used again.[17]

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[15] See e.g. ARET 9. 79 and TM. 75. G.1463 (concerning metals), which have two intersecting lines on both sides.
[16] Manufactures goods registered in general accounts had instead a ceremonial character. Sometimes an object given to a certain person was replaced by another one of higher value (see de Urioste Sánchez 1996).
[17] This fact is best exemplified in the archives of the Third Dynasty of Ur. For the practical utility of the documentation in the central archive of Ebla, see below,
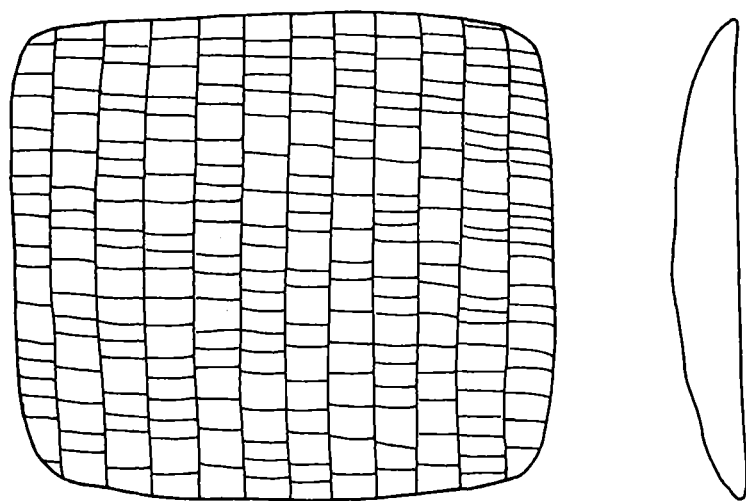
FIG. 2.5. Format of the monthly account of sheep deliveries

The administrative branch concerned with deliveries of vict-
uals is relatively well documented.[18] The case of the distribution
of sheep for meat consumption sheds some light on the record-
keeping procedures in this sector. Twenty tablets, measuring about
20 cm. per side, distinguished by a particular shape—rounded
edges, flat on the obverse, regularly convex on the reverse (Fig-
ure 2.5)—register the deliveries of sheep from the palace for the
last twenty months of the city's life.[19] Each tablet is a monthly ac-
count, with three sections concerning respectively animals to be
sacrificed to the gods in the city (*nídba é dingir-dingir*), those to be
consumed at the palace,[20] and those for officials sent on some ex-
pedition (*kaskal-kaskal*) and for sacrifices outside Ebla. The totals
vary between 800 and 1,000 head per month.

A first document comprising a longer period is TM. 75. G. 2306.

p. 30. It is noteworthy that most of the larger tablets registering agricultural products
have not been baked (were they written outside the city?); in consequence, they are
poorly preserved.

[18] See the detailed study by Milano (1984), with previous literature.

[19] Four of these documents have been published by Pettinato (1979).

[20] *ku en, Tubuhu-Hadda, Ir'aq-damu, dumu-nita-dumu-nita en-en, guruš-guruš é
en* 'as victuals for the king, (the minister's son) Tubuhu-Hadda, (the heir to the
throne) Ir'aq-damu, the princes, the workers of the palace'.

It registers the totals of the animals delivered in three months, pre-
serving the same expense details as the monthly accounts. Another
tablet, TM. 75. G. 2096, gives the totals for ten months always
according to the destinations of the animals fixed in the monthly
documents. At the end, however, the grand total adds up to the
animals delivered for offerings (*nídba*) and victuals (*ku*) on the one
side, and those which have been killed (*ug₇*: 'slaughtered'?), on the
other. Finally, two tablets, TM. 75. G. 1629 and 1630, simplify
the registration of the totals by listing the sheep, for seven and
twelve months respectively, according to only two categories: ani-
mals which have been offered (*nídba*)—surely including also those
delivered as victuals at the court—and those which have been killed.

The multi-month tablets must relate to the two to three years
preceding the 20 months documented through the monthly sheep
accounts. In fact, there is no coincidence between the totals of the
two groups of documents. Here the practice of transferring single
items of data from one document into another comprising a larger
administrative period, followed by the destruction of the former
documents, can be clearly identified. However, the administration
had not yet elaborated a standard document for summarizing the
sheep deliveries for a fixed period. The older documentation on
this administrative sector was not considered worthy to be kept in
the central archive.

The same deficiency is found in the record-keeping of cereals and
bread, malt for beer, and oil for the palace. This documentation was
not kept in the central archive, but in a room (L. 2712) located in
the north-east corner of the audience hall (Fig. 2.1: B), together
with many vessels, particularly cups, which must have been used
for high officials and messengers from abroad. This administrative
sector was in charge of a group of scribes not working for the central
archive, as is shown by some writing peculiarities.

Again we notice the lack of general patterns in drawing up ac-
counts. Most of the texts are monthly documents, but the recipients
of the victuals are often listed in different ways. Some other docu-
ments include the record-keeping concerning a certain number of
months, which is different from text to text. These documents seem
to cover in all about three years (ARET 9. 323–48). The monthly
documentation of the seven preceding years was destroyed, while
their data were transferred onto a large tablet, TM. 75. G. 427 (also
kept in room L. 2712), and registered according to several head-

ings (Pettinato 1974–7). Thus, this archive collected together the record-keeping for cereals consumed at the palace for about ten years. It is impossible to explain why wine was not administered from this office. Two tablets registering the distribution of wine jars have been found in the southern wing of the royal palace together with three other tablets, which is all that survives of another small administrative archive (cf. Archi 1993: 18–26).

Balanced accounts are extremely rare and none relates to the balance of a sector for an annual or monthly administrative period. These are defined as 'documents concerning issues (and) revenues', *dub-gar è mu*-DU.[21]

The documents do not offer any direct hint allowing us to determine in which offices the administration was organized.[22] The central storehouse was *é siki* 'the house of wool'; metals were collected in another building called *é-am*. We do not know what personnel were employed in those centres, including the scribes who worked there. Only the Sumerian monolingual lexical lists contain the name of the scribe who copied it, in the colophon. Moreover, *dub-sar* 'scribes' appear very rarely in the administrative documents as assignees of goods. According to the accounting procedure, individual assignees were only rarely defined by their function; scribes do not appear to have formed a group like, for example, the *nar* 'singers'.

We noted above that the monthly and annual accounts must have been drawn up on the basis of individual records of accounting operations which were then destroyed or cancelled. The same data could be used for different kinds of documents. One tablet, TM. 75. G. 2271, records, year after year, the amounts of precious metals consigned personally by the minister Ibbi-Zikir to the palace over a period of 17 years, giving a total of about 135 kg. of gold (the total of silver is illegible). Some of these amounts also recur in the first section of the annual delivery texts, that concerning the goods given to the palace by the minister and ending with the formula *mu*-DU *I-bí-zi-kir*. The section of TM. 75. G. 2271 given below concerns the 13th year (13 *mu*) of the mandate of Ibbi-Zikir, and finds a correspondence in the delivery text ARET 8. 528:

[21] See TM. 75. G. 1353 and TM. 75. G. 1402; Milano (1980); Alberti (1981).
[22] On the few *bullae* found at Ebla see Archi (1996*b*).

TM. 75. G. 2271 obv.			ARET 8. 528 obv.		
VI	4	5 *ma-na* 53 *kù-gi*	I	11	5 *ma-na*
			II	1	53 *kù-gi*
	5	6 *babbar:kù*		2	6 *babbar:kù*
	6	*šir-za* GIŠ-*šudul si-si*		3	1 *šir-za* GIŠ-*šudul*
				4	*lú si*
	7	13 *mu*			

5 minas 53 (shekels) gold, 6 (shekels) silver (for) the decoration of a throne . . . 13th year.

The reason why this account of deliveries of Ibbi-Zikir (TM. 75. G. 2271) was drawn up is not clear: possibly it was to prepare the transfer of functions from the by now elderly minister to his son Tubuhu-Hadda, who already held a prominent position in the administration. We have, however, no certain indications that the information in TM. 75. G. 2271 was gleaned from the annual delivery texts rather than from documents held by the minister himself.

Two lenticular tablets, ARET 7. 18 and 8. 535, give the deliveries in gold to the kings of Armi and Kablul, registered also in four yearly accounts (*mu*-DU texts). The first document concerns the 9th and 10th years of minister Ibbi-Zikir, while the second one relates to the 12th and 13th years (cf. Archi 1997–8: 109–10). Once again, the reason for drawing up these documents, which cover such a brief period of time, is not at all clear.

The actual use of archive material is perhaps illustrated by an account of fields, cattle, and sheep preserved in a small archive in the southern wing of the royal palace (TM. 82. G. 266). The data regarding the cattle attributed to the king are drawn from a detailed document concerning the 'overseers of the cattle' which was kept in the central archive (TM. 75. G. 10213; Archi 1993: 15).

Duplicate copies are exceptional. TM. 75. G. 2069 registers an available supply of 1,200 minas of silver (564 kg.) for the '5th year' (5 *mu*) of an undefined administrative period. All of this silver is spent (*è*) over the following two years (4 and 3 *mu*). This section is also reproduced in TM. 75. G. 2104. The first tablet, which would appear to be the original document, then adds that in the 2nd and 1st years no payments (*nu-mu*-DU) were made into this fund (Archi 1982: 181).

An account which should relate to an annual balance, TM. 75. G. 1700, lists one of the highest totals of silver in the treasury

ever registered, 3,569 minas (=1,677 kg.), and large quantities of agricultural produce: 138,620 sheep, 8,770 head of cattle, 501,866 measures of barley in 'the hills' (DU_6^{ki}), i.e. the territory west and north-west of the city, 855,530 measures of barley in the area adjacent to the city (*uru-bar*), 5,635 jars of oil, and 204,400 measures of barley recorded by the overseers of the farmers (*ugula engar ugula engar*) of the king. This document has a duplicate in TM. 75. G. 10228 + 10262, which provides no further administrative information as to why the text was written.

It is very likely that only in exceptional cases were the documents, in particular the monthly and annual accounts, used for administrative reasons in the following years. The lack of dates made their consultation difficult. As has been stated above, their chronological order could be detected only from the sequence which the tablets presented on the shelves of the archive room, aside from actual remembrance of the events registered in the tablet. On the other hand, in a society where the use of writing and reading was limited to such a close group of people, who would keep the archive in order once a document had been checked and stored?
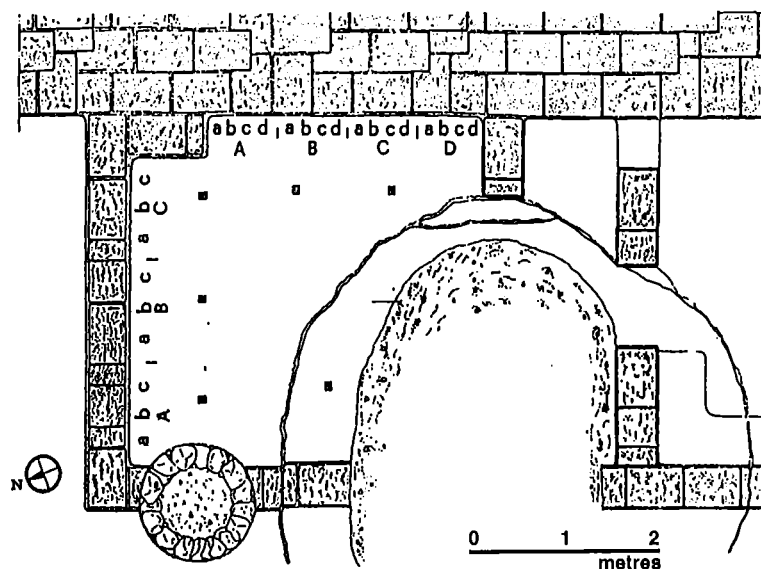
FIG. 2.6. Plan of the central archive (room L. 2769)
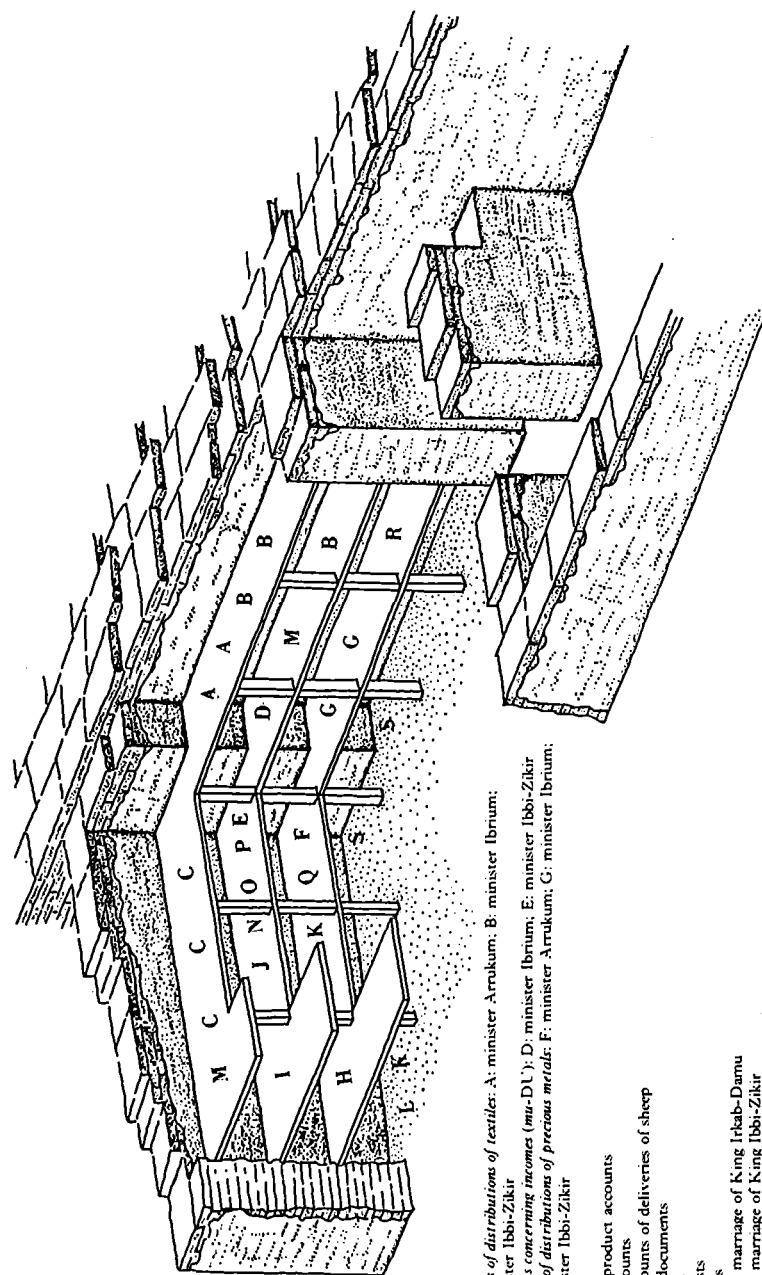
FIG. 2.7. Arrangement of the tablets in the central archive

Monthly accounts of distributions of textiles: A: minister Arrukum; B: minister Ibrium; C: minister Ibbi-Zikir.
Annual documents concerning incomes (mu-DU): D: minister Ibrium; E: minister Ibbi-Zikir.
Annual accounts of distributions of precious metals: F: minister Arrukum; G: minister Ibrium; H: minister Ibbi-Zikir.

I: field texts
J: agricultural-product accounts
K: livestock accounts
L: monthly accounts of deliveries of sheep
M: chancellery documents
N: literary texts
O: unilingual lists
P: bilingual lists
Q: ritual for the marriage of King Irkab-Damu
R: ritual for the marriage of King Ibbi-Zikir
S: lenticular tablets

The original position of the documents in the central archive may be deduced only in a very general way from records of the place in which the tablets were found at the time of the excavations (Figures 2.6 and 2.7). The complete collapse of the wooden shelving threw the tablets to the floor, so that it is extremely difficult to establish from which shelf they originally came.

In the first two sections starting from the north-eastern corner, the highest shelf of the eastern wall (2.90 m. long) held the monthly accounts of deliveries of textiles. These records were drawn up at the time when Arrukum was minister, and therefore probably go back to the start of archival record-keeping. When Arrukum was succeeded by Ibrium, this kind of document continued to be kept on the highest shelf, the sequence being continued on the next one down once this was full. Alongside this, on the north wall (3.15 m. long), the monthly textile accounts of Ibbi-Zikir were kept, probably on the first and second shelves. Below these, on the middle shelf of the north wall, the bilingual and monolingual lexical texts were placed, the earliest of which were drawn up when Irkab-Damu was king and Arrukum minister. The chancery documents, such as edicts and royal pronouncements, were mainly kept in the corner towards the western wall. Apart from the textile accounts of Ibrium, the archive material of the minister was also kept on the east wall, on the lower shelves. The annual accounts of outgoing silver and gold were stored in the centre, the incoming quantities towards the south corner, while the annual accounts of deliveries of Ibbi-Zikir were in the north-east corner, and those for outgoing quantities of metals towards the western corner. Agricultural administrative documents were kept along the eastern wall, some resting directly on the floor. In the corner between the north and east walls, probably in wicker baskets which have left no trace, the lenticular tablets were kept.

It has been possible to establish the original position on the shelves only for the large tablets and those with squared-off edges, which were less likely to be moved accidentally. The monthly accounts of deliveries of textiles, between 3 and 5 cm. thick, were stood upright on the shelves, which had a width of 80 cm., with the obverse facing the centre of the room and in rows of 10–15 tablets.[23] These were turned through 90° in relation to what is generally considered to have been the direction of the writing at that time.[24] In

[23] See photographs 13–16 in Matthiae (1986), 65. Cf. Archi (1988), with table 1.
[24] Some believe that the rotation through 90° from the direction in which the

this way the first column of the obverse was completely legible if one merely pulled slightly forward the outer tablets leaning against the one to be consulted. The heavy annual accounts of deliveries of silver and gold were generally placed directly on the floor, again with the reverse facing the wall. Thus, the colophon could be consulted only if a tablet was removed. The writing was oriented in the same way as the textile accounts, with the exception of one tablet, which was turned in the direction we believe to be that of the writing.[25]

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tablets were written (and read) occurred only during the 21st cent. BC. In that case, originally the reverse would have been positioned on the shelves in the same direction as the writing.

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3

Archival Practices at Babylonia in the Third Millennium

PIOTR STEINKELLER

In this paper I first make some general remarks on the nature of Mesopotamian archival materials, such as those which survive from the third millennium BC. I then deal in more detail with the specific case of the archives of Umma in the Ur III period (*c.*2112–2004 BC). Let me stress at the outset that these observations are not based on a systematic review of such materials; neither do I have any statistical data to support my conclusions. What I have to offer are merely impressions, which have come to me as a result of my preoccupation over twenty-five years with administrative records. There have been no earlier attempts to give a broad characterization of this body of evidence, and my observations will of necessity remain impressionistic. However, if this paper provokes responses and possibly even initiates a new area of enquiry, its purpose will be served.

When one looks at the assemblages ('archives') of administrative records of the third millennium in their totality, the most striking fact about them is that the overwhelming majority of documents concern items (generally material objects, but also such ephemera as human labour and the rental period of boats, to offer two examples) that were deployed or expended *outside* of the institution responsible for the preparation of a given record. Conversely, records of the items that were delivered to and subsequently stored in the institution in question are comparatively infrequent. The reason for this situation seems quite obvious, although, as far I know, the point has never been noted in print. The items that are brought to and

Note. For bibliography see p. 56.

stored in a given place are easier to account for than those that are given away. Therefore, the general tendency is to record the latter and ignore the former. The records of such external expenditures, conventionally classified as 'receipts' by Assyriologists, generally take the form of a statement to the effect that party A received item *x* from party B. The standard verbal forms used in this connection are either *i-dab₅* or *šu ba-ti*, both meaning 'he received', depending on whether the received item is animate or inanimate (Steinkeller 1977: 42–3). Records of this type were prepared expressly for the expending or disbursing party, in whose possession they would remain either indefinitely or until they were transferred. This usually happened at the end of the year, when the records were transferred to the central accounting office. Starting in the Ur III period, such receipt tablets would almost invariably be sealed by the receiving party, with his private or official seal. Receipt tablets predominate especially in the archives associated with smaller institutions, with a comparatively simple internal organization and a limited scope of economic activities. The situation is noticeably different in the case of larger institutions. There, records of the items that entered the institution in question are considerably more common. Such records generally take the form of *mu*-DU 'delivery' tablets. In certain instances, as in the case of the archives of Puzriš-Dagan in Ur III times (cf. Maeda 1989), delivery tablets could account for a significant percentage of all documentation. However, the case of Puzriš-Dagan is atypical in many ways, for it was a completely unique institution: a redistribution centre for cattle, sheep, and other types of animals that were delivered to the central government from the entire empire as payment of various taxes and duties. Given this fact, and considering the great volumes of items that entered Puzriš-Dagan daily as a matter of course, it is not at all surprising that *mu*-DU tablets are so common among its records. By contrast, in other contemporaneous major archives, even those matching Puzriš-Dagan's size and complexity of internal organization, delivery records (though more common than in the archives of smaller institutions) are still comparatively infrequent. This is, for example, the situation one finds in the provincial archives of Girsu/Lagaš and Umma (the latter of which is discussed below, p. 40).

At least from Pre-Sargonic times (2450–2350 BC)—though probably true as far back as the Uruk III period (3100–2900 BC)—the

administrative documents produced by a given institution generally formed a single, interconnected chain of records, tracing the passage of individual items through the local economy. Such a chain begins with a delivery tablet (optional), which is then followed by a sequence of receipt tablets; from the Ur III period onwards, individual receipts are commonly linked to one another by balanced accounts. To illustrate how this accounting scheme worked, let me offer the following hypothetical example, involving the flow of copper in institution *x*. After an outside delivery of copper was made to *x*, the central office of *x* might prepare a delivery tablet, although usually this was not done. The copper was then transferred to the smith, the transaction being recorded in a receipt tablet, which remained in the possession of the central office. The copper received by the smith in this way was used to produce agricultural tools. As these were distributed among farmers, the smith would prepare and retain for himself receipt tablets documenting such outgoings. Conceivably, the farmers would subsequently return broken tools to the smith. If this happened, receipt tablets would be written and issued to them. At the end of the year, all the receipt tablets would be transferred to the central office of *x*, which, by juxtaposing assets and debits of all the parties involved, would balance their individual accounts (see the flow-chart in Figure 3.1).

Although it is true that in general the archives are principally made up of receipts, which were exceedingly common, or records of deliveries, which were far less frequent, one should not overlook the existence of other types of record that regularly form part of the archives of the third millennium, such as plans and surveys of fields, orchards, and house-plots, various types of agricultural estimates and projections, rosters of the labour force, and letter-orders, to name only the most important among them. However, in comparison with the former two types, such records are numerically quite insignificant.

In this connection, it should also be noted that not only administrative records but also the so-called 'legal documents' are generally classified as receipts (Steinkeller 1989: 115). This is true of all the major types of legal documents: the sale document is but a receipt for a price paid, the loan document, a receipt for a loan issued, the hire document, a receipt for wages paid. To clarify these points, I shall now draw an outline of the accounting procedure which can be reconstructed for the province of Umma in the Ur III period.
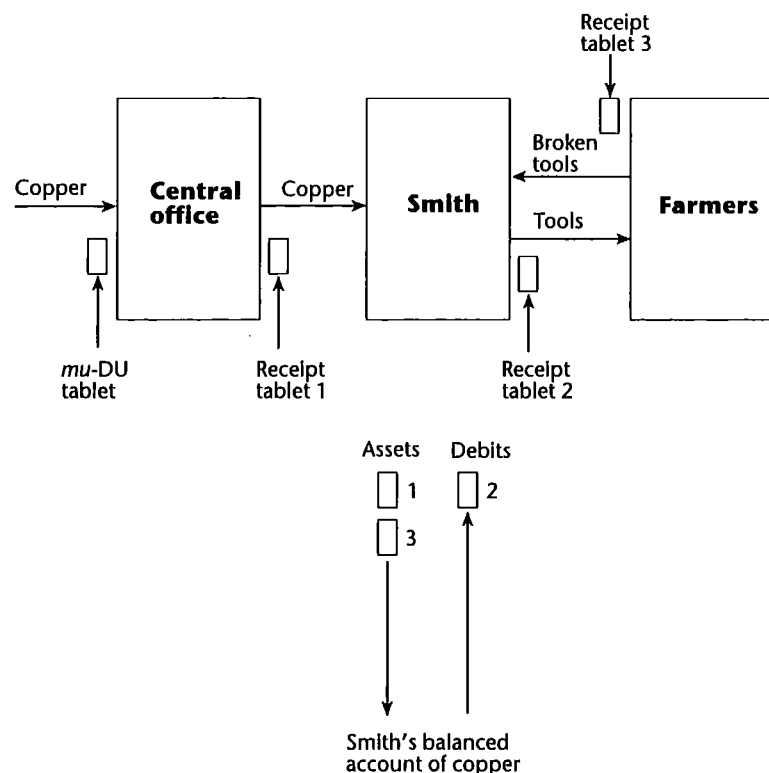
F IG. 3.1. Flow of copper and records in institution *x*

This will then be illustrated by concrete groups of records from the surviving evidence.

The Ur III archives of Umma (modern Djoha) cover a period of roughly 38 years, from approximately year 32 of Šulgi's reign through to year 3 of Ibbi-Suen's reign.[1] After Girsu-Lagaš, Umma was the second largest and economically most important province of the Ur III state. The site of Umma was never explored scientifically: there survive at present some 15,000 tablets from the site, all of which come from illicit excavations. Of this number, *c*.9,000 have been published. The extant documents are almost without exception official, or public, records, prepared by the various departments of the Umma administration to document the workings

[1] For the administrative legal Ur III documents in general see now the excellent overview by Sallaberger (1999), 200–37.

of the government and economy throughout the entire province. These records served both the internal (province *per se*) and external (central government) accounting purposes.

Although nothing is known about the circumstances of their discovery, it appears certain that most, if not all, of the Umma tablets presently known were originally stored in a single location, which must have functioned as the central archive of the Umma government. This is indicated both by the internal organization of the documentation, which clearly forms an interconnected whole, and by the fact that the documents came to the antiquities market as a result of what had apparently been a single discovery. Among all this material, there are only a handful of texts which may be classified as 'private' records (such as sale and loan documents). Although the latter records could, at least theoretically, have come from private residences, the chances are that they too were stored in Umma's central archive. Since the distribution of tablets in individual containers, such as must have existed at the time of their discovery by the looters, is unknown, the original physical organization of the archive is almost impossible to reconstruct. This, in turn, makes it a truly formidable task to determine how the Umma government and economy were structured and operated. Although various facets of the internal organization at Umma have been studied, no attempt at a general reconstruction of the system has been made.

The basic facts are clear enough, however. In accordance with the general organizational principles of the Ur III state (cf. Steinkeller 1987*b*), the province comprised two administrative and economic entities, largely independent of each other: first, the province proper, which represented what had earlier constituted the traditional city-state of Umma, and was run by the governor (*énsi*); and second, the crown sector (essentially, the members of Umma's military organization), which was subordinated directly to the central government (i.e. the king) and was run by the local generals (*šagina*). The activities of the crown sector are virtually never recorded in the surviving texts (they can only be glimpsed when the crown interacts with the governor's organization).

The administrative head of the province proper was the governor, under whom fell all the temple households and the various offices responsible for running particular branches of the Umma economy. Among the latter institutions, whose existence is generally only implied rather than made explicit by the records, the most important

were the following: the agriculture office, controlling all aspects of the cultivation of the province's arable land; the grain office, in charge of the collection, processing (milling), storage, and distribution of cereals and cereal products; the labour office, keeping track of the labour exacted from various segments of the province's population; the animal office, in charge of the provincial herds of cattle, sheep, and goats; the wool office, in charge of wool and garment production; the leather office, in charge of leather production; the metal office, in charge of metal production (primarily metal tools); the boat office, controlling the production and use of boats, barges, and rafts; and the forest sector, supervising the harvesting of timber and certain plants in Umma's 'forests'.

A key role in this system was played by the so-called fiscal office (cf. Steinkeller 1987a: 76 n. 17), which, among other things, was responsible for the collection of various taxes and payments. There are strong reasons to suspect that this particular office actually coordinated and probably even supervised much of the economic activity at Umma. If so, the fiscal office would have to be identified as the command centre of Umma, through which the governor ran the entire province and communicated with the central government.

The single most characteristic feature of the Umma records is that they form a coherent, closely interconnected system. This system, which is both highly efficient and exceptionally economical, consists essentially of a chain of receipt tablets, linked one to another by balanced accounts. Through the use of such a receipt chain, the administrators were able to trace the movements of virtually every item that was available to them, from the moment it entered the system, until it reached its final destination.

Deliveries arriving from outside the province seem to have been recorded only rarely, if at all. For example, we have no records of incoming cattle and hides from the redistribution centre of Puzriš-Dagan, even though it is known indirectly that such deliveries were made as a matter of course. Thus, the sources from Puzriš-Dagan mention withdrawals of cattle by the representatives of the Umma government, and they talk of the subsequent transfer of these cattle to Umma.[2] Similarly, we read, in the Umma texts concerned with the conscription of labourers for public works, of boats that returned to Umma from Puzriš-Dagan carrying hides.[3] One might expect records of such deliveries to be prepared by the Umma animal and leather offices respectively, but they seem not to exist. Metals such as copper and gold were also obtained from outside the province (usually by the Umma merchants, for whom see below, pp. 53–6), but again, no records of such deliveries exist. According to the surviving evidence, goods originating outside the province are—with few exceptions—first heard of in the texts dealing with their subsequent distribution within the Umma economy.

In contrast, deliveries of goods originating within the Umma economy were usually, but by no means always, recorded. Such documentation took the form of tablets characterized by the formula *mu*-DU 'delivery', which constitute, at least for some items, the starting point of the accounting procedure. The items noted in this way were essentially the main products of the provincial economy, such as cereals, cattle, sheep, goats, animal hides, wool, garments, timber, and wooden products. Other major items recorded in delivery tablets were various taxes and dues (paid in silver, grain, or cattle) and gifts made by individuals to the chief Umma deities. Statistically, delivery tablets probably represent less than 10 per cent of the total corpus.

As the collected goods and services were subsequently spent or allocated, their passage through the economy was traced and documented by means of a receipt chain (cf. above, p. 39). The Umma receipt tablets of this type are almost invariably sealed, the sealer being the respective receiving party or his representative. As noted earlier, such receipts remained in the possession of the disbursing party. It can be estimated that at least 80 per cent of all the Umma tablets fall under this category. The organization of the Umma government and economy is still very inadequately understood, and it is difficult to ascertain which particular institutions or offices prepared written records and maintained their own internal archives. Those which are almost certain to have done so (because of their size and the evidence of their having functioned as discrete administrative entities) include the fiscal, agriculture, grain, labour, animal, wool, and boat offices, as well as the forest sector. All of these institutions apparently produced documentation, in the form of both delivery records (*mu*-DU) and receipts. However, since the

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[2] e.g. NBC 10805 (unpublished, information courtesy of T. Sharlach); Hallo (1973), text 18; Kang (1972), text 182. See in detail Sharlach (1999).

[3] e.g. Gomi and Yildiz (1997), text 2396; Kang (1973), text 90; Sigrist (1983), text 147.

entire organizational scheme was probably controlled by the fiscal office, to which all other offices were administratively subordinated, it is possible that some of the documentation appearing to stem from branch offices may actually have originated in the fiscal office.

The records of deliveries (*mu*-DU tablets) and expenditures (sealed receipt tablets) produced in a given office were subsequently used by the office in question (or, probably more commonly, by the fiscal office) to compile, for each disbursing official, a separate balanced account (*nig*-ŠID-*ak*). After this was accomplished, receipt tablets would then be lent to other offices to verify their own records. Eventually, at the end of the year, all the records of a given office would apparently be transferred to the fiscal office. The latter would then digest the necessary information to calculate the total yearly contribution of each office, in terms of its commodity production and labour output. Having in this way calculated the total contribution of all the Umma institutions, the fiscal office would finally assess Umma's tax liability (*bala*) *vis-à-vis* the central government. At the final stage of the accounting procedure all the records, after having been grouped according to individual offices and disbursing parties, would be deposited in separate tablet-containers (*pisan-dub-ba*). As suggested earlier, all such containers were stored in one central place, which functioned as the depository of the Umma archives. Although its identity remains unknown, there are indications that this place may have been identical with the fiscal office.

Having offered this brief description of the principles governing the preparation and use of official (public) records at Umma, I shall now illustrate their practical application by three specific examples, each involving a different group of documents.

I. Records of Labour Exacted from the Unskilled Workers of the UN-*íl* and *éren* Classes

One of the largest blocks of documentation within the Umma archives is formed by the records of labour exacted from various classes of the Umma population in lieu of their obligations *vis-à-vis* the state. Excluding the slaves (who had no citizen rights and were numerically insignificant), the population of Babylonia in Ur III times was divided into two basic classes: (1) the lower stratum, most

often classified as UN-*íl* 'carriers' or 'menials'; and (2) the upper stratum, designated as *éren* 'soldiers/workers' (or, alternatively, as *dumu-gir₁₅* 'natives' or 'free citizens'). The former, enjoying only partial citizen rights, worked for the state all the year round, were provided with food throughout the year, and were allocated three days of free time per month. The latter, enjoying full citizen rights, worked for the state only fifteen days per month, and, accordingly, were granted provisions for only half of the year.[4]

The *éren* class was further divided into two distinctive groups. The members of the first, more privileged, group, which comprised officials, various professionals, and craftsmen, were provided with land allotments for their private use. After fulfilling their obligations towards the state (which they would normally do by plying their trade), these individuals resumed their regular professional activity and took care of their allotment fields. In contrast, the less privileged group of *éren* were not provided with land allotments. These individuals, best described as the unskilled labourers of the free class, spent their work-duty working on agricultural, building, and other projects. During their free time (fifteen days per month) they continued to be employed in exactly the same fashion, but this time in return for wages, which were usually three times higher than the rations they received when fulfilling their work-duty.

Among the Umma labour records, particularly numerous are those concerned with the work provided by the menials (UN-*íl*) and the unskilled labourers of the free class (*éren*). Both types of labourer would be incorporated into single work-gangs, each headed by a different foreman (*ugula*). As noted above, the UN-*íl* members of such work-gangs were employed and provided with rations all the year round. In contrast, the unskilled free citizens working in the same gangs were employed and provided with rations for only half of the year. This working half of the year bore the designation *bala gub-ba* 'performing the duty'. During the other half of the year, called *bala tuš-a* 'sitting out the duty', the same labourers would hire themselves out for wages (*á hun-gá*), usually to work in the same gangs to which they were assigned during the *bala gub-ba* period.[5]

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[4] For the organization of Ur III labour see Steinkeller (1987a; 1996); Waetzoldt (1987).
[5] For the principles governing the deployment of such workers see, provisionally, Maekawa (1976); (1987), 63–5; Sigrist (1979; 1980); Steinkeller (1987a); Uchi-

As far as can be ascertained, the chain of documentation deal-
ing with the labour of these workers starts with the records of
individual work assignments to which particular work-gangs were
allocated. These documents,[6] which take the form of receipts and
are invariably sealed, show the following basic pattern:

(1) *x* workers for *y* days;
(2) description and location of the work assignment;
(3) under the supervision (*ugula*) of PN1;
(4) the seal (*kišib*) of PN2;
(5) date.

In this laconic formulation, PN1 is the foreman of the work-gang.
The sealing official is to be identified as the receiving party, since
the phrase *kišib* PN1 is identical with the formula PN1 *i-dab₅/šu
ba-ti* 'PN1 received', the latter formulation being used in unsealed
receipts. As for the item that was received in this transaction, it was
the conscripted workers or, more correctly, the man-days they spent
working on the assignment in question. Accordingly, in purely ac-
counting terms the sense of this record is as follows: 'PN2 re-
ceived from PN1 *x* man-days to perform such-and-such a work
assignment'. What happened in reality, however, was the following
sequence of events: (*a*) PN2 commissioned PN1 to do job *x* at lo-
cation *y*; (*b*) PN1 brought his workers to *y* and completed job *x* as
requested; (*c*) PN2 prepared for PN1 a sealed receipt tablet (*kišib*)
for the expended man-days.

The receipt tablets of this type would be stored among the fore-
man's records. At the end of the year he would present all such
receipts to Umma's labour office, which in fact may have been
identical with the fiscal office. The labour office would then com-
pile a balanced account of the labour (= man-days) supplied by him
in a given year. Among the surviving examples of such accounts
are those of the foremen Lu-Šara (Nissen, Damerow, and Englund
1991: 92–3, text Kat. Nr. 11.1), Lu-sig (Grégoire 1996: text Ashm.
1924-665), and Lu-Dani (de Genouillac 1925: text 5674). These
balanced accounts have the same three-part structure, recording
respectively: (*a*) man-days on hand; (*b*) expended labour; (*c*) con-

tel (1984; 1992; 1996). I shall offer a discussion and revaluation of this problem
elsewhere.

[6] For this type of document see Steinkeller (1977), 43. The conclusions offered
there are to be corrected in accordance with the present discussion.

cluding balance. Part (*a*) begins with the man-days left over from
the previous year, continues with a list of the members of the gang
and the total number of man-days due from them, and concludes
with a grand total of man-days available. Part (*b*), which lists the
expended man-days, is a digest of individual receipts accumulated
by each foreman. In the case of the balanced account of Lu-Šara,
which dates to the second year of Šu-Suen's reign (2037–2027 BC),
at least eight of the transactions listed among Lu-Šara's expendi-
tures can be matched with the actual receipt tablets.[7]

While it is evident that part (*b*) of such accounts was written on
the basis of individual receipt tablets, it is less clear which docu-
mentation was used to compile part (*a*). Obviously, the informa-
tion about surplus man-days left over from the previous year came
from the foreman's balanced account for that year, but other docu-
ments may also have been used. One thinks especially of the yearly
inspections of the labour force (the so-called *gurum₂-ak* rosters),
which are attested for other classes of workers.[8] That such records
were indeed prepared (but either have not survived to our times or
were discarded as part of the accounting procedure in antiquity)
is strongly indicated by the fact that in the balanced account of
Lu-Šara his men are divided into two groups: the 'former' workers
(*libir-àm*), i.e. those who worked under him in the preceding year,
and the new ones, who were added to his gang during the current
year. It appears virtually certain that the information about the
new workers could have come only from documents of the *gurum₂-
ak* type.

After the receipts were digested by the labour office, they would
be lent to other offices to compile or verify other types of record.[9]
In particular, they would be conveyed to those offices with which

[7] (1) Nissen, Damerow, and Englund (1991), 92–3, Kat. Nr. 11.1 iv 6–17 = Molina
(1993), text 397; (2) v 2–4 = Waetzoldt and Yildiz (1994), text 1359; (3) v 12–16 =
Waetzoldt and Yildiz (1994), text 1567; (4) v 20–2 = Gomi and Yildiz (1993), text
1630; (5) vi 1–3 = Waetzoldt and Yildiz (1994), text 865; (6) vi 12–16 = Gomi and
Yildiz (1997), text 2608; (7) vii 3–5 = Sigrist (1990), text 380; (8) vii 12–15 = Waetzoldt
and Yildiz (1994), text 1071.

[8] See Steinkeller (1987a), text 41; Watson (1993), text 288, which are discussed
below, p. 53.

[9] The technical term (attested only at Umma) for conveying receipt tablets held
by one office to another for accounting purposes is the word *dib* (Akk. *etēqu*), lit. 'to
transfer, convey'; cf. Steinkeller (1989), 285. Thus, the receipts that were conveyed
in this way are called *kišib dib-ba* 'transferred receipt tablets' (for examples see below,
pp. 48–52).

the beneficiaries of the expended man-days (i.e. the individuals identified as *kišib* PN in the receipts) were institutionally associated. As for the balanced accounts, these would later be used by the grain and wool offices to calculate the volumes of barley and wool rations due to the members of each work-gang during a given year. This information would then be verified against the records of the actual disbursements of such rations, in order to balance the account of each worker. Once the receipts and balanced accounts made a full round through the various offices, they were returned to the labour office. At this point they were put in groups according to individual foremen and deposited in separate clay tablet-containers (*pisan-dub-ba*). The contents of each container were identified by a clay tag, which was attached to it with a piece of string.

As is indicated by the fact that a single *pisan-dub-ba* could contain records from several years, old records were subject to yearly reviews. When needed, new tablets were combined with the old ones, in either the original or a new container, and a new tag was accordingly prepared. There survive several *pisan-dub-ba* tags that accompanied the types of labour record here considered. Compare the following four examples, which concern the tablets of the foremen Lu-Šara, Lu-sig, Idpae, Ur-Ninsu, and Lu-duga (for Lu-Šara and Lu-sig see above pp. 46–7):

(1) *pisan-dub-ba níg-ŠID-ak á éren-na-ka Lú-Šára ugula mu bàd Mar-tu ba-dù ù mu ús-sa bàd Mar-tu i-gál.* (Nikolski 1915: text 91).

The tablet container: [in it] are the balanced accounts of the labour of the *éren* people of Lu-Šara, the foreman, [for] the years Šu-Sin 4 and Šu-Sin 5.

(2) *pisan-dub-ba níg-ŠID-ak ù kišib dib-ba-bi Lú-sig, ugula mu en Unu₆-gal ᵈInanna ba-hun.* (Gomi and Yildiz 1993: text 2103)

The tablet container: [in it are] the balanced account and the corresponding [*lit.* its] transferred receipt tablets of Lu-sig, the foreman, [for] the year Amar-Suen 5.

(3) *pisan-dub-ba kišib dib-ba á éren-na-ka Íd-pa-è ù Ur-ᵈNin-su iti 12-kam i-gál iti še-gur₁₀-kud-ta iti ᵈDumu-zi-šè mu ús-sa bàd Mar-tu Mu-ri-iq-Ti-id-ni-im mu-dù.* (Nikolski 1915: text 92)

The tablet container: [in it] are the transferred receipt tablets of the labour of the *éren* people of Idpae and Ur-Ninsu, [the foremen], for 12 months, from the 1st through to the 12th month, the year Šu-Suen 5.

(4) *pisan-dub-ba kišib dib-ba á éren-na Lú-dùg-ga dumu Hé-ma-DU iti 12-kam i-gál mu ús-sa ᵈŠu-ᵈSuen lugal-e bàd Mar-tu Mu-ri-iq-Ti-id-ni-im mu-dù.* (Nikolski 1915: text 96)

The tablet container: [in it are] the transferred receipt tablets of the labour of the *éren* people of Lu-duga [the foreman], son of Hema-DU, for 12 months, the year Šu-Suen 5.

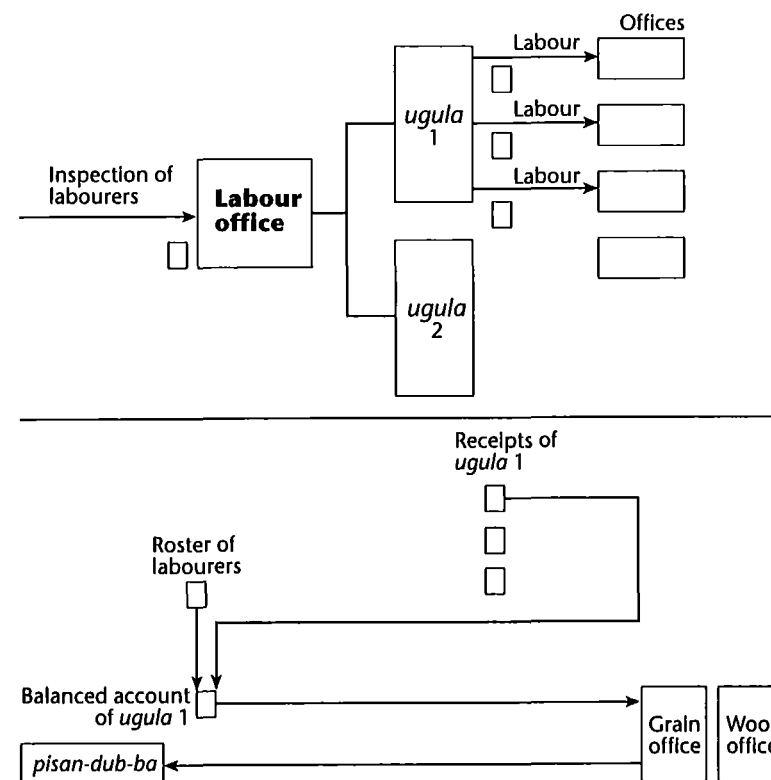For the reconstructed flow of documentation see Fig. 3.2.

FIG. 3.2. *Modus operandi* and records of Umma's labour office

2. Records of the Forest Sector

My second example is a group of records dealing with the activities of Umma's forest sector, which was concerned with the manage-

ment and exploitation of the thickets or copses (Sum. ^{GIS}*tir* 'forest') growing throughout the province along rivers and canals.[10] The forest sector comprised thirty such 'forests'. These were administratively divided into three groups of ten, each group remaining under the control of a different foreman (*ugula*). The whole operation was managed by a single overseer, residing in the province's capital.

To each of the forests there was attached a team of workers, who appear to have been permanently domiciled near to their place of work. These workers or 'foresters' were engaged in the harvesting of timber, certain grasses, and the *gazi* plant. Each team of foresters was required to deliver to the state specific yearly quotas of the products in question. As for their social and economic status, the Umma foresters belonged to the most privileged class of labourers. As indicated above (p. 45), the workers of this rank worked for the state for only half the year (fifteen days per month). Most of the labour provided by the foresters in this capacity was spent on producing the prescribed volumes of forest products, though occasionally they were assigned to other tasks as well. In exchange for their labour, they were given food rations for the duration of their work-duty, and provided with allotments of arable land.

There survive some 200 documents bearing on the activities of the forest sector.[11] Study of these records reveals the existence of a set of operational and accounting procedures which regulated the collection and distribution of forest products. The products harvested by the personnel of the forest sector were all brought to Umma, where they were stored in a special warehouse, remaining under the control of the foresters' overseer. As the deliveries were made, they were recorded in documents of the *mu*-DU category. It appears that such documents were prepared by the overseer himself and were stored among his records. There survives only one tablet

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[10] For the specifics see Steinkeller (1987*a*); Sallaberger (1999), 326–30.

[11] Steinkeller (1987*a*), 102–15, texts 1–73, plus well over 100 texts that have become available since then. Among the latter, especially important are the following: Watson (1993), text 288, a roster of the foresters' labour force in the year Amar-Suen 6; Gomi and Yildiz (1997), text 2872, a record of the conscription of an individual for forest work for a period of 8 months; Gomi and Yildiz (1993), text 1931, a record of the conscription of an individual for forest work, for a period of 1 month; Gomi and Sato (1990), text 508. 1–4, a list of rental land (*apin-lá*), one of the renters being Ur-emaš, the overseer of the forest sector, who receives 24 *iku* of land.

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of this type (Steinkeller 1987*a*: text 42), recording a yearly delivery of the *gazi* plant.

A party wishing to withdraw forest products from the warehouse needed first to obtain authorization from either the head of the fiscal office or the governor of Umma. The official in question then prepared a sealed letter-order, which instructed the overseer of the forest sector to disburse the products in question. Examples of such letter-orders are Steinkeller (1987*a*), texts 54, 65, 66, 70, and 71. Upon receiving the letter-order, which could be delivered either by the withdrawing party or his representative, the overseer made the disbursement. The transaction was duly recorded in a receipt tablet, which, after being sealed by the withdrawing party, was deposited among the overseer's records. The overwhelming majority of the extant documents are receipts of this type. At the end of the year the overseer's records of deliveries and expenditures were transferred to the fiscal office. Based on this documentation, the fiscal office then compiled a balanced account of forest products. The only surviving example of such a record is published in Steinkeller (1987*a*), text 19. Series of balanced accounts could then by used by the fiscal office to draw up multi-year records of this type. Of the latter category, only one example survives, covering the seven years from year 8 of Amar-Suen (2038 BC) to year 5 of Šu-Suen (2032 BC) (Steinkeller 1987*a*: text 60).

The overseers' tablets were also utilized by the fiscal office to compile composite records of specific groups of expenditures. The only existing example of such a record is Steinkeller (1987*a*), text 18, which lists several separate expenditures made by the overseer Ur-silaluh. As we learn from its colophon, this document is a digest of the receipt tablets which were received by Lu-kala (the head of the fiscal office) from Ur-silaluh: *kišib dib-ba ki Ur-sila-luh-ta Lú-kal-la šu ba-ti* '[these are] transferred receipt tablets; Lu-kala received them from Ur-silaluh'.

After the overseer's records were digested by the fiscal office, they would be borrowed by other Umma offices or economic establishments in order to prepare or verify their own records. Steinkeller (1987*a*), text 52, is an example of an account compiled from the tablets stemming from the forest sector. It lists various articles, mostly forest products, withdrawn in the years Amar-Suen 3, Amar-Suen 3–5, and Šu-Suen 2 by the officials Agu, Lu-šagizu, Ur-Numušda, and Lu-igišagšag. Five of the withdrawals recorded

in it can be matched with surviving tablets (Steinkeller 1987a: 95). As we read in its colophon, this document concerns 'receipt tablets of wood and reed, which are to be debited to the accounts [of the four officials in question], [and] which were received [*lit.* transferred] from Lu-kala [the head of the fiscal office] by Lugal-nesage' (*dub* A.KA-*a gá-gá giš gi ki Lú-kal-la-ta Lugal-nesag-e ba-an-dib*). Agu, Lu-šagizu, Ur-Numushda, and Lu-igišagšag were probably subordinates of Lugal-nesage, who had, therefore, borrowed the receipt tablets from Lu-kala to prepare a record of goods withdrawn by his office during those years from the forest sector and other sources.

Apart from the records concerned with the collection and distribution of forest products, as described above, there also survive tablets dealing specifically with the labour and provisioning of the workers employed by the forest sector. This documentation is closely related to the sources discussed above in Section 1. In this body of evidence, particularly important were the yearly rosters of the foresters' labour force. Such rosters, of which two examples are extant (Steinkeller 1987a: text 41; Watson 1993: text 288), were prepared at the end of the year to determine the volumes of barley and wool needed to sustain the foresters during the following year.

For the reconstructed flow of documentation see Figure 3.3.

3. Records of Merchants' Activities

A conspicuous group of records within the Umma archives is formed by the tablets concerned with the dealings of the central administration with a group of merchants (*dam-gàr*).[12] The Umma government employed some twenty merchants, whose main task was to procure for it a wide assortment of goods not available locally, and to facilitate the distribution of these goods throughout the local economy. In addition, the merchants took care of the collection and distribution of various minor local products (especially perishables such as fruit, vegetables, and fish), a task that was too small and cumbersome for the central administration to handle. In their dealings with the Umma government the merchants were directly subordinated to the fiscal office (for which see above, pp. 43–4).

[12] For the Umma merchants see Neumann (1979; 1993); Snell (1982); Steinkeller (1987c).
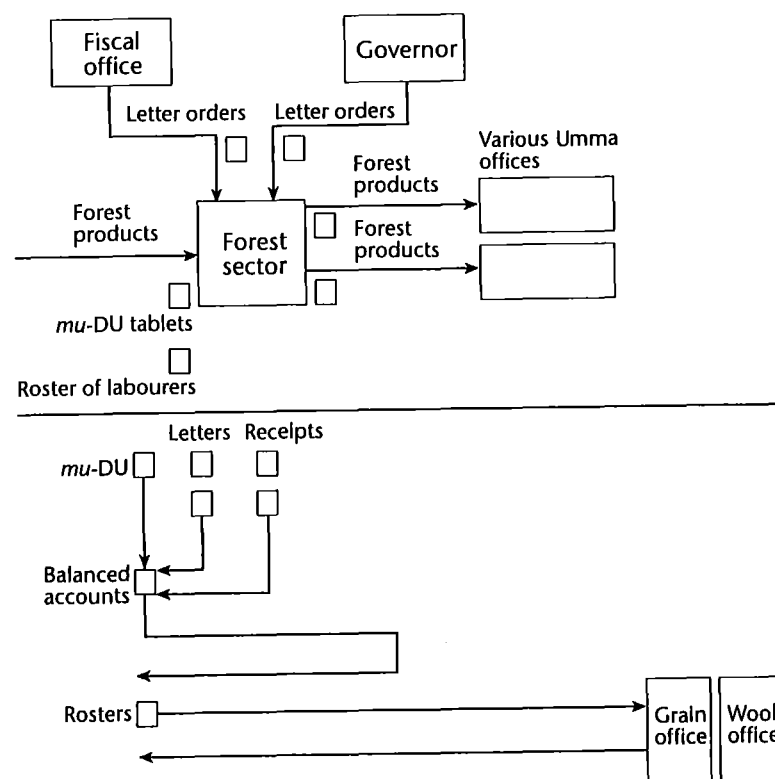
FIG. 3.3. *Modus operandi* and records of the forest sector

The relationship between the merchants and the fiscal office was governed by the following basic principles.[13] The fiscal office had a standing account with each merchant, into which it periodically funnelled bulk capital in the form of grain, silver, and wool. The transfers of capital were duly recorded in sealed receipt tablets, which were retained by the fiscal office. At the same time, and quite independently, various offices and departments of the Umma economy made withdrawals, according to their particular needs, of the goods that the merchant kept on hand in his warehouse. These transactions were recorded in another set of sealed receipts, which were kept by the merchant.[14] At yearly or shorter intervals the

[13] See Steinkeller (1987c), the conclusions of which are summarized in Neumann (1993), 73–6.

[14] Examples of such receipt tablets are D'Agostino (1997), text 160; Watson

merchant presented the receipts in his possession to the fiscal of-
fice, which then processed its own set of receipts, calculated the total
of the advanced capital against the merchant's expenditures, and
balanced his account. The end product was a document commonly
known as the 'merchant balanced account', numerous examples of
which survive.[15]

Apart from this standard procedure, in which the movement of
capital and the movement of goods proceeded in two separate chan-
nels, the fiscal office could also place specific purchase orders with
the merchant. The capital advanced to the merchant to make such
purchases was recorded in standard receipt tablets, which, like the
merchant's other receipt tablets, would eventually be digested in
the merchant's account among his assets.[16] As in the case of records
discussed earlier (Sections 1 and 2 above), the receipts that were
used to compile merchant balanced accounts would subsequently
be passed on to other Umma offices and economic establishments
to compile or verify their own records. At the end of the account-
ing chain they would be sent back to the fiscal office, where, after
being sorted according to the merchants' identities, they would
be stored in individual *pisan-dub-ba* containers. Not surprisingly,
the documentation extant bears only on those facets of the mer-
chants' activities in which they directly interacted with the Umma
administration. We know virtually nothing of how the merchants
acquired their goods, except for the fact that they or their agents
travelled outside the province (often abroad) to obtain them. But
there are no surviving records of such trips and the goods acquired
in the process. If such documents existed, which is highly doubtful
in my view, they would have been kept in the merchants' private
residences in the city of Umma, which were never excavated.

There is yet another side of the merchants' professional lives con-
cerning which our documentation is almost completely silent. This
is the purely private side of their activities, unconnected with their
official contracts. As we have seen, in their dealings with the Umma
administration merchants functioned very much like bankers, since

(1993), text 134; Sigrist (1988), text 16; Sauren (1978), text 335; Sigrist (1983),
texts 174, 483; Gomi and Yildiz (1993), text 2263; Schneider (1930), text 253; Owen
(1991), text 355.

[15] See Snell (1982); Steinkeller (1987c); Sallaberger (1999), 316–23.
[16] See e.g. de Genouillac (1925), text 6056. 24–5, as compared with ll. 32–4 of the
same text.

the arrangement in question provided them with a constant supply
of liquid capital. Although the merchant would have spent most
of this capital in keeping his warehouse fully stocked, he could
use the remainder to finance his own ventures or investments. The
most obvious way in which he would put this capital to work was
to advance it to private individuals in the form of interest-bearing
loans, as was the case during the same period in the city of Nippur.
Unfortunately, however, the few private loan documents that come
from Umma cannot be linked confidently with any of the known
Umma merchants. The chances are, nevertheless, that such docu-
ments remain stored in the merchants' private houses at Umma,
which are yet to be unearthed.

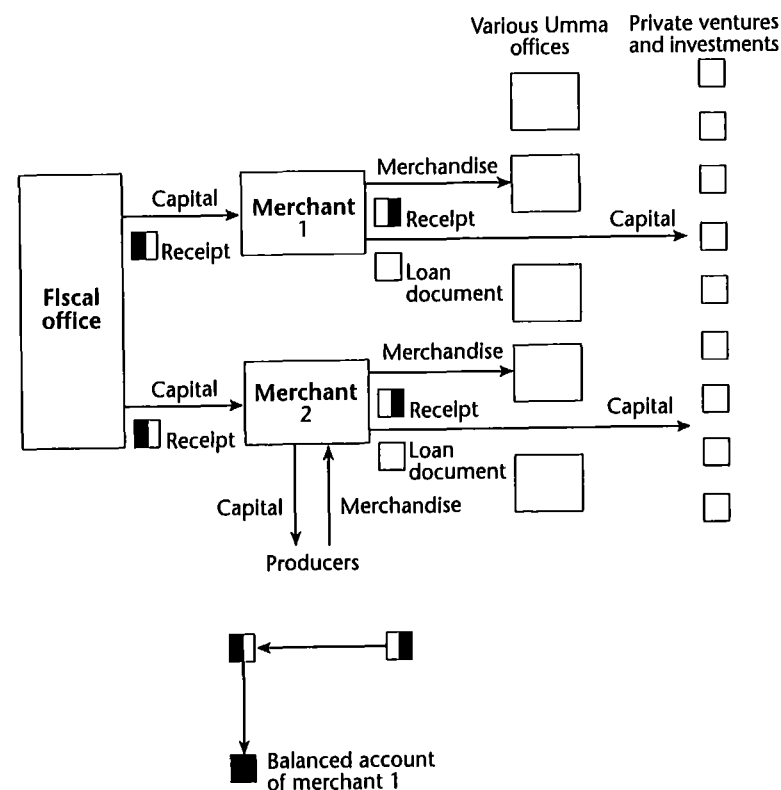For the reconstructed flow of documentation see Figure 3.4.

FIG. 3.4. *Modus operandi* and records of Umma merchants

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4

Private and Public:
The Ur-Utu Archive at
Sippar-Amnānum (Tell ed-Dēr)

KAREL VAN LERBERGHE

1. Introduction

In 1974 and 1975 the Belgian Archaeological Mission to Iraq headed by L. de Meyer discovered over 2,000 tablets in a 'private house' at Tell ed-Dēr, the ancient Sippar-Amnānum. It soon became clear that the central person of this archive was a man by the name of Ur-Utu, chief lamentation priest (*kalamāḫum*) of the goddess Annunītum. Ur-Utu held his office from year 5 to year 18 of the reign of Ammi-ṣaduqa (1647–1625 BC) (Tanret 2001). Archaeological evidence shows that the house in which the tablets were stored burnt down. Previously this fact has been interpreted by the archaeologists and epigraphists who have studied the archive (including myself) as proof that the storage of tablets was still going on at the time of the fire and that the Ur-Utu archive should therefore be considered an 'active' archive.

The greater part of the archive dates to between years 28 and 37 of Ammi-ditana (*c*.1683–1647 BC), the last years of his reign, up to year 13 of Ammi-ṣaduqa (see Figure 4.1). Then there is
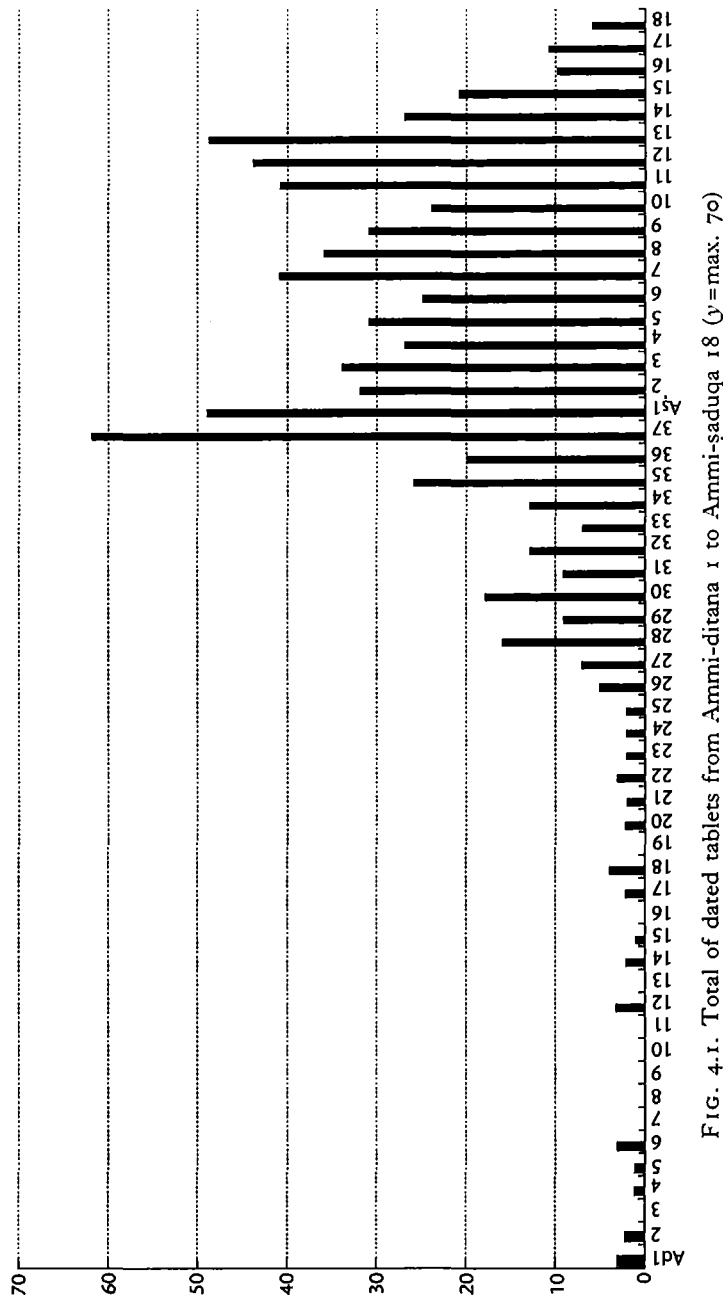
FIG. 4.1. Total of dated tablets from Ammi-ditana 1 to Ammi-saduqa 18 (y = max. 70)

a gradual decline in the number of tablets until year 18. Tablets dated before the year 5 of Ammi-saduqa's reign (1642 BC), the year in which Ur-Utu became priest, never mention his name, but do mention the name of Inanna-mansum. This man was Ur-Utu's father, who was also chief lamentation priest, most probably from year 1 of Ammi-ditana's reign (1683–1647 BC) until year 5 of the reign of Ammi-saduqa's reign. At first sight this seems to imply that only documents related to the office of chief lamentation priest were kept in the archive. Does this give us an indication concerning the 'private' or 'official' character of the archive? In fact there are two main categories of stored texts. To the first belong tablets which are primarily concerned with real-estate transactions of Ur-Utu, Inanna-mansum, their wives, fathers, grandfathers, and other members of the family. The acquisition of real estate by this family is particularly well attested in the archive, especially through contracts concerning sale, exchange, inheritance, division of family property, litigation, letters regarding paternal possessions, and related 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln'.[1] These are mainly older documents, some dating from the times of early local rulers of Sippar, Immerum, and Iluma-ila. In addition, the sale and control of temple prebends seem to belong to the private economic activities of the priests and their family. This category might lead us to think of the archive as a 'private archive'. The second category, by contrast, consists of a group of 'younger' texts dated to the reigns of Ammi-ditana and Ammi-saduqa, and consisting of different administrative records, which are often linked to the personnel of the temple of Annunītum, including loan and lease contracts, as well as texts dealing with the performance of the rites (*parṣū*) of Annunītum (see Figures 4.2–4.4). These are tablets which, without their archaeological context, would be considered to belong to 'official' archives of a temple or palace, yet they were stored by the priests in their 'private' house.

[1] This special type of tablet was so named by Wilcke (1982). It is a sealed tablet without envelope apparently replacing older (lost?) titles of ownership and occurring mainly in the later Old Babylonian period (Van Lerberghe and Voet 1991a).
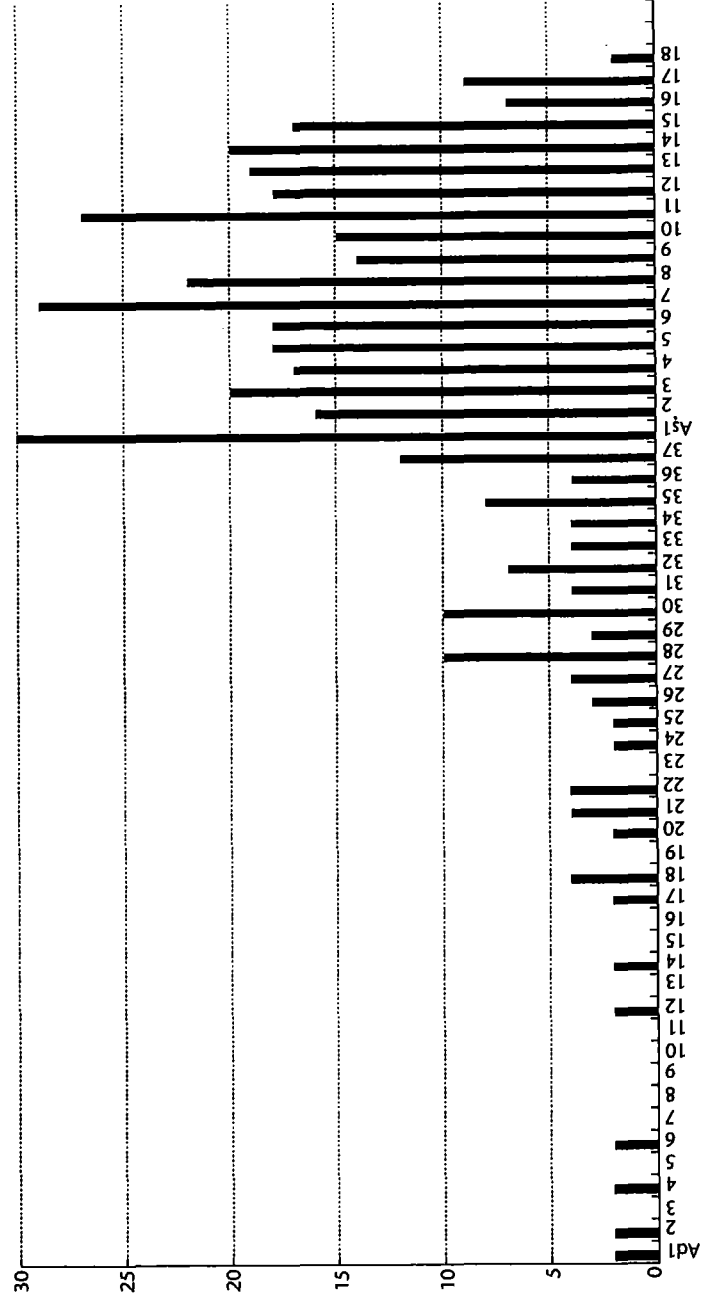
FIG. 4.2. Administrative tablets from Ammi-ditana 1 to Ammi-ṣaduqa 18 (y=max. 30)
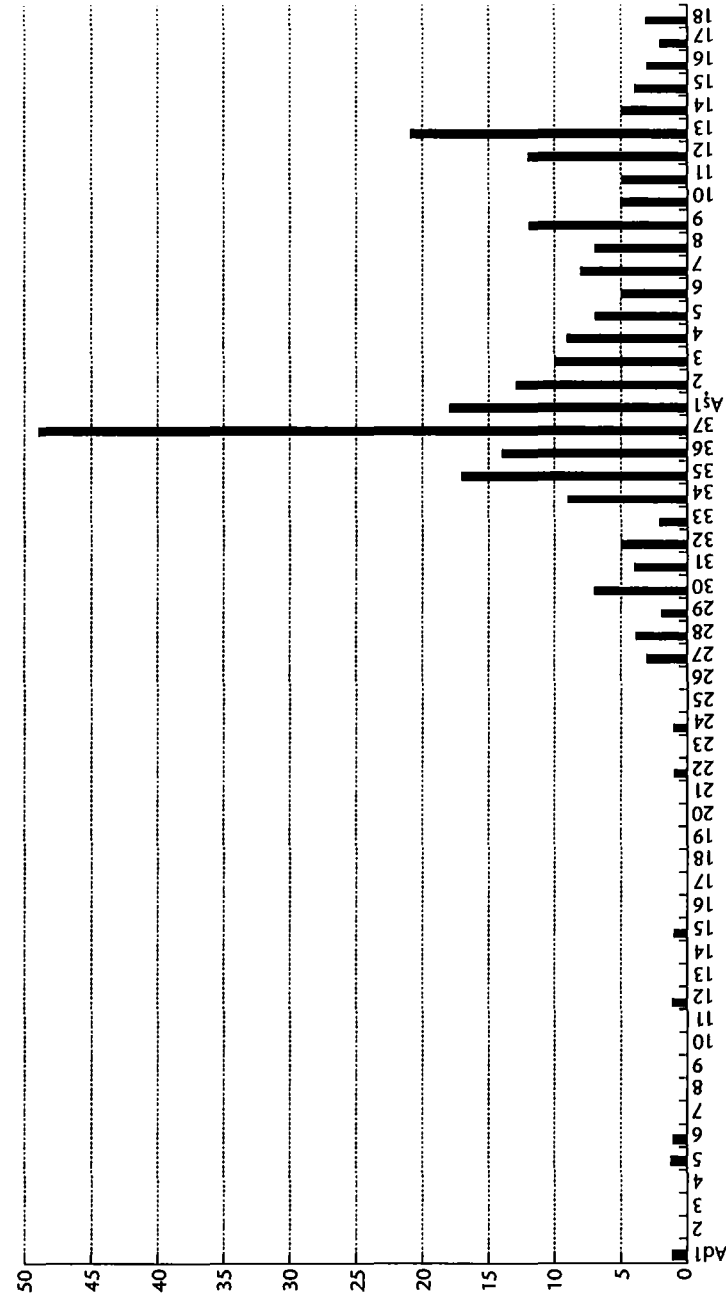
FIG. 4.3. Loan contracts from Ammi-ditana 1 to Ammi-ṣaduqa 18 (y=max. 50)
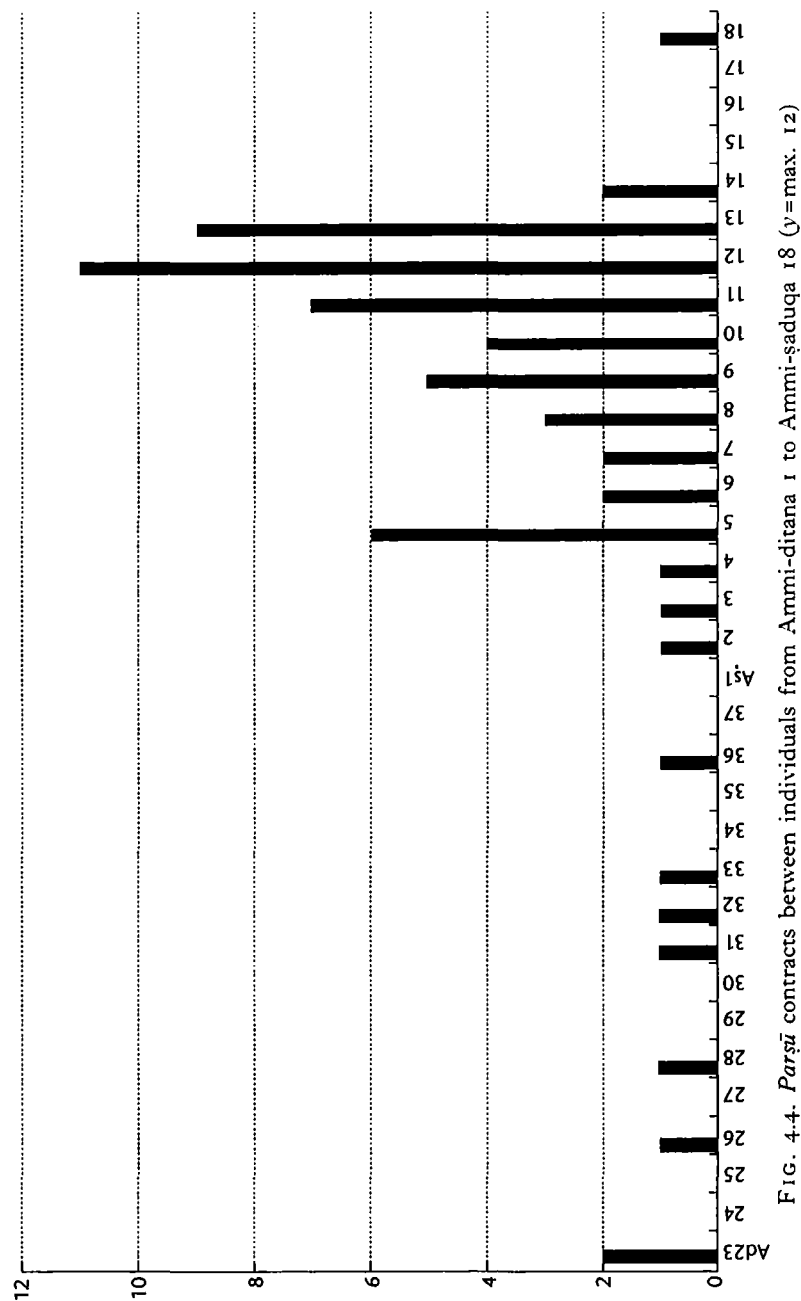
FIG. 4.4. *Paršu* contracts between individuals from Ammi-ditana 1 to Ammi-ṣaduqa 18 (y=max. 12)

2. Archaeological and Philological Data

For the Oxford workshop in 1998 I tried to place the tablets in their archaeological context, hoping to find a relation between the place where they were discovered and their format, contents, and genre. I looked at transliterations and photographs of 1,855 tablets and fragments found in rooms 17 (484 tablets), 18 (21 tablets), 22 (1,277 tablets), and 23 (48 tablets) (see Figure 4.5). I also discuss an important group of 25 tablets which, according to the excavator H. Gasche, were buried under the floor of room 22 (see Figure 4.6). I exclude from consideration a group of school tablets found in area 4 since they may not be related to the archive (Tanret 2002).

The archaeological data concerning Ur-Utu's archive were published by H. Gasche (1989), and both Gasche and Janssen (1996) have discussed the organization of the archive. I go into more detail than Janssen, but it is evident that some of her observations have to be reiterated here. I begin by outlining the problems encountered when trying to discuss the archive, and consider Gasche's and Janssen's hypotheses about the distribution of the tablets and the function of the rooms.

Archaeological evidence shows that Ur-Utu's house burnt down. Since the youngest texts are dated to year 18 of Ammi-ṣaduqa, both authors date the fire to this year. The archive was distributed between four different rooms (rooms 17, 18, 22, and 23; Figure 4.5). Almost all of the tablets were found on the same archaeological level (IIIb). Two small groups were buried under this level in small holes in room 22 (Figure 4.6).

Room 18 contained 21 tablets, mainly harvest labour contracts mentioning the name of Inanna-mansum, Ur-Utu's father. Janssen (1996: 239) suggests that these tablets may have been intentionally discarded. I do not see any conclusive evidence for this suggestion, since a number of small documents from other rooms, including a few other harvest labour contracts, are dated to the same period, i.e. the time of Inanna-mansum's office. For whatever reason, these tablets seem to have been stored separately in room 18.

Almost all the tablets from room 23 belong to group O.[2] Gasche's

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[2] See the key to Fig. 4.5: the letters indicate groups of tablets that were found together at a single point.
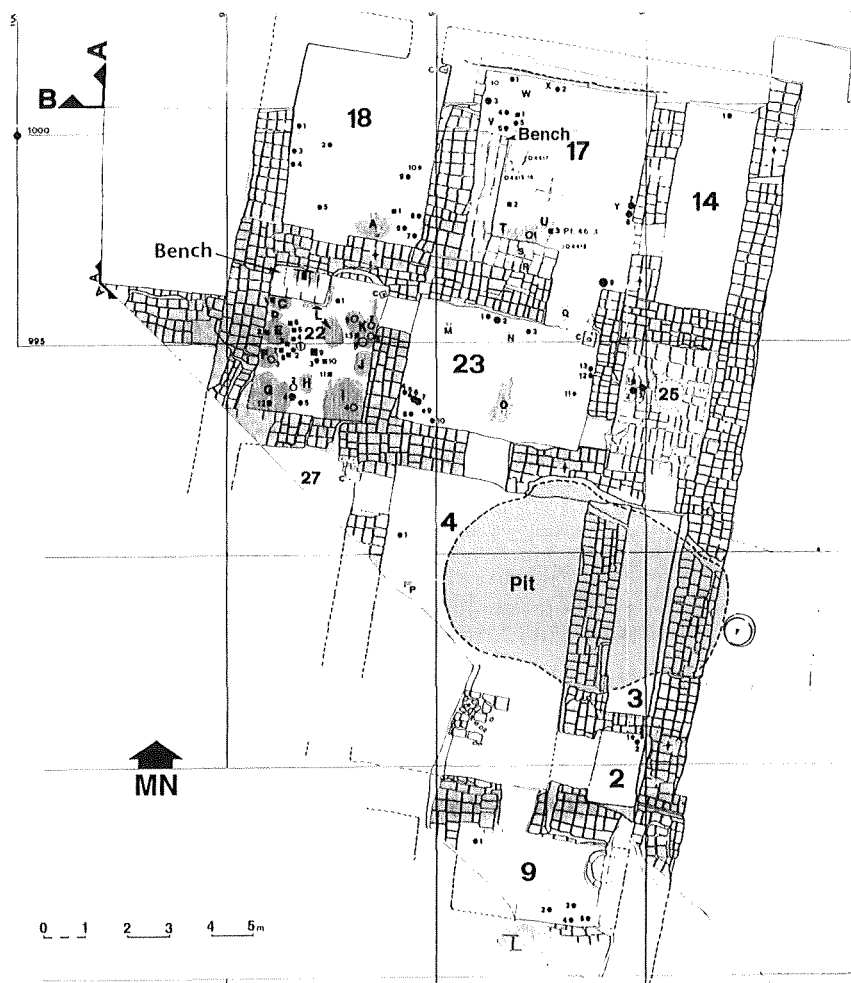
FIG. 4.5. House of Ur-Utu, phase IIIb. Groups of tablets. (Gasche 1989: plan 4)
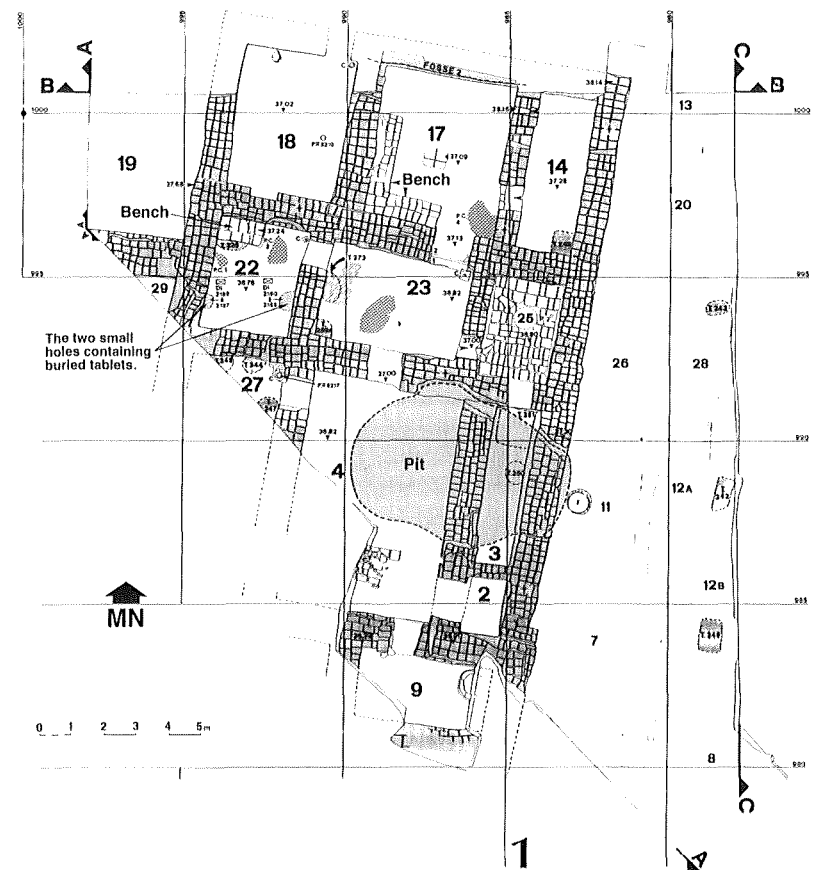
FIG. 4.6. House of Ur-Utu, phase IIIb, including the two groups of buried tablets in room 22. (Gasche 1989: plan 3)

idea, followed by Janssen, is that these tablets fell to the floor at the moment when someone tried to save them from the burning house:

> In the heat of the moment, the two steps between Rooms 17 and 23 escaped the attention of one of the carriers. He stumbled and dropped his heavy load, 49 tablets, which were left behind . . . The fact that some tablets were dropped on the way out, raises the question as to how many more were saved. (Janssen 1996: 239)

This would imply that these tablets were among the most valuable in Ur-Utu's archive. Indeed, many of the texts are real-estate transactions (mainly old sale contracts, titles of ownership, 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln'). I give an overview of the contents of these texts below.

In room 22 all the groups of tablets, apart from Group L, lay near the east, south, and west walls. They make up nine separate heaps of tablets, which seem to have been stored as such in antiquity (although they may have been mixed up when the roof collapsed). Group K consisted of two parts, separated by boards made of wood, including poplar (Gasche 1989: 30). It seems evident that room 22 should be considered an archive room. However, Gasche suggests that it was a place where tablets were temporarily stored after the house had been rebuilt, and that the owners were in the process of transferring the archive to room 17.

Room 17 contained 485 tablets, and traces of wooden boards were also discovered here. Janssen (relying on Gasche's account) describes the condition of the tablets when they were found:

> If this was indeed the definite archive room, we can assume that these tablets had been classified. Such a classification, however, if it existed, was not reflected by the way they were found. The tablets lay in two large heaps at the foot of the bench. The undeniable chaos was ascribed to Ur-Utu's hasty search for important documents during the disaster. It seemed that some were picked out while others—among which some 150 letters—were just dropped on the floor. We note that the salvage attempt was confined to this room, which confirms its function as archive room. (Janssen 1996: 239)

Since no classification system was recognized by them, Janssen and Tanret looked for other ways of grouping the tablets, encouraged in their research by the discovery of the existence of 'chains' of related real-estate property documents in the archive, such as deeds of ownership, division contracts, records of inheritance, and sale

documents.[3] Despite the lack of clear evidence for archival storage procedure, the Oxford workshop has inspired me to go through the Ur-Utu tablets once more, though without much hope of reaching important new conclusions.

3. The archive, room by room

Group U in room 17 is made up of 31 letters and 114 administrative and juridical texts. The oldest documents are of a juridical nature and mostly concern real-estate transactions within Ur-Utu's family. Sale contracts of fields are dated to the reign of King Samsu-iluna. Contract registers describing field sales under Hammurabi and Samsu-iluna are stored here together with sale contracts mentioning the same fields dated to year 11 of Ammi-ṣaduqa, c.90 years later (Van Lerberghe and Voet 1991*b*: nos. 4, 8). Together with these tablets, letters documenting litigation and quarrels between Ur-Utu's family members were found in the same group (Janssen 1992*a*; Van Lerberghe and Voet 1991*b*: nos. 68–9). Remarkably, these letters (of the *zeḫpum* type: small with rounded edges) mention Ur-Utu as the sender and were still in an envelope on which Ur-Utu's seal had been rolled. Clearly they are copies of highly important letters, kept by Ur-Utu in his archive for juridical purposes. Dowries and inheritance contracts involving Ur-Utu's relatives belong to the same group. It becomes clear that tablets were stored here according to their contents: juridical documents and letters relating to the same subject were kept together.

Group U also contains a great number of administrative documents, such as notes on the delivery and dispatch of barley and silver, rations for personnel of the temple of Annunītum, lists of personnel, lists of harvesters, rations for the fatteners of the *nakkam-tum* house, and taxes for the palace. If these documents had not been found in a regular excavation but had belonged to a museum collection—as is usually the case for the thousands of Old Babylonian tablets—it would never have been thought that they once belonged to the Ur-Utu archive. They show that both chief lamentation priests were acting as officials of the temple of Annunītum in Sippar-Amnānum and even of the palace in Babylon. There is

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[3] The study of these 'chains of transmission' will be published by Tanret as MHEM 2. On old family property cf. Van Lerberghe and Voet (1991*a*).

also the clear implication that tablets which are usually considered to be part of an 'official' archive can be stored in a 'private' house.

Other documents belonging to group U are diverse lists concerning rites (*parṣū*) performed for the goddess Annunītum. These large tablets have a typical format and were thus easily recognizable in the archive. They all refer to women performing the rites, the name of the rite, and officials, mainly priests, often acting as guarantors (Tanret and van Lerberghe 1993). In total there are six such tablets,[4] four of which were stored together in groups U and T (the other two comprise group R, which contains no other documents). Since the two tablets of group R were still lying on the south bench of room 17 and the other four lay on the floor near the bench, it seems most likely that the six were stored together, and that they fell off the wooden shelves during the fire that devastated the house. They were stored together according to their distinctive shape and their content. Storage by content is clearly shown by the letters from the archive. No fewer than 32 of these concern the performance of rites, and almost all belong to group T (a few to group U). Apart from these lists and letters, 97 small contracts were discovered recording silver or barley owed by men and women in exchange for the performance of a rite (Tanret and Van Lerberghe 1993: 438). They all originate from room 22 and were, according to their inventory numbers, found in the same context.

Group T contains 126 letters and 238 texts belonging to various genres. Several of the tablets from this group are linked with those from group U. Good examples are the receipts for beer rations, which are all dated to years 14 and 15 of Ammi-ṣaduqa: 14 of these belong to group U and 21 to group T. They all have the typical *zeḫpum* shape. Related to these texts are accounts of beer rations for periods of several months (see e.g. Van Lerberghe and Voet 1991*b*: nos. 17–31).

My first impression concerning room 17 is that there are indications that the tablets were stored here according to their shape and contents. It is clear that they fell on the floor during the fire. The following conclusions may be stated:

(1) All letters concerning the problems that Ur-Utu had with his family properties were kept in room 17 together with documents

proving his rights. Among them were old sale contracts (some *c*.90 years old), contract registers enumerating the fields bought by his parents, and 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln', written when old titles of ownership got lost. It should also be noted that groups of very old documents of this genre (dated to Iluma-Ila, *c*.1890 BC, and Sin-muballiṭ, *c*.1880 BC) were found together in small holes under the floor of room 22 and in group O in room 23. Sealed copies of letters were made and kept in the archive.

(2) The more important documents relating to the *parṣū* proceedings, i.e. the lists of the performers and all related letters, belong here. The 97 small individual debt contracts related to these *parṣū* rites were, however, stored in room 22, most probably together with other debt contracts. It is hard to believe that these documents belong to Ur-Utu's private archive, as they are clearly related to the administration of the temple of Annunītum.

(3) Tablets could have been stored according to their shape as well as their contents. Many of the beer receipts and letters, both of the *zeḫpum* type, lay together, according to their inventory numbers.

(4) Room 17 contained typical 'private' documents as well as 'official' documents. It is unclear whether it might be possible to determine whether they were stored separately.

The largest number of tablets—1,401 in total—were found in room 22. According to Gasche, this was a place where the tablets were stored before a selection of the more important documents was made, the classification then taking place in room 17. Because of the great number of tablets and their occurrence in nine heaps it was not easy to reach conclusions concerning the theme of this workshop. Complete data are available for room 17, but there is no comprehensive set of transliterations and photographs of the documents from this room.

Before considering the contents of the various groups, one should notice two striking facts. First, as observed by Janssen in her study of the letters of the Ur-Utu archive (Janssen 1992*b*: 27), there are only 33 letters among the 1,401 tablets of room 22. It is striking that the 'royal' letters (on which see Janssen 1991) were discovered here along with a number of other letters addressed to one person, Ili-iqišam. The latter set were found in groups D and G. It is hard, although perhaps not impossible, to find other data that might explain the occurrence of this small number of letters in this

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[4] I know of only two other Old Babylonian lists which are comparable to these. One comes from the temple of Tašmētum, the other from the temple of Ṣarpanītum.

room. The distribution of the letters among the groups appears to be as follows: group C 1 letter (l.)/27 tablets (t.), group D 5 l./25 t., group F 2 l./100 t., group G 13 l./145 t., group I 5 l./263 t., group L 1 l./206 t. If there are links between those letters and administrative and juridical texts belonging to the various groups, the connections are not obvious; no letters concerning Ur-Utu's real-estate properties were stored here: these were all kept with related juridical documents in room 17. Second, as mentioned in our discussion of room 17, the *parṣū* proceedings were important economic activities for Ur-Utu and his father. The 32 letters and 6 lists concerning these activities were stored in room 17. No comparable texts can be quoted from room 22, but all the small debts quoting individuals, men as well as women, who performed the *parṣū* rites were found there. They are not grouped together (though conceivably they were originally) but are dispersed over groups C, D, G, I, and L. Very few documents (11 out of 63 dated texts) from Inanna-mansum's time were kept (Figure 4.4).

Other categories of texts found in room 22 are administrative tablets, loan contracts, and field leases. The various administrative documents, including receipts for barley and silver, lists of personnel, ration lists, and lists of workers, were the main type of documents found in room 22 (Figure 4.2). In contrast to the real-estate tablets, these administrative documents are usually 'young'. For the first 27 years of the reign of Ammi-ditana we have an average of 1–2 tablets per year. Between year 28 and his final regnal year (37) the number of documents rises to 5–10 per year. There is a sudden increase between the first and the fourteenth year of Ammi-ṣaduqa, when the average number of documents amounts to 20 tablets per year. Fewer documents occur for the last years of the archive.

This means that the storing of administrative tablets in the archive was not immediately linked with the 'owner' of the archive or the official in charge of storing the 'official' documents, since Inanna-mansum, Ur-Utu's father, remained in office until Ammi-ṣaduqa's fifth year. The implication seems to be that political events, such as the assumption of power by Ammi-ṣaduqa, played an important role in the decision as to which administrative documents should be kept in the archive.

Inanna-mansum and Ur-Utu were very active in lending out silver and barley. It is not always clear whether they did this in

a private capacity or as officials of the temple of Annunītum. I have counted about 200 loan contracts, the majority of which come from room 22 (Figure 4.3). Their chronological distribution is only partly comparable to that of the administrative documents: there are almost no contracts before Ammi-ditana's 27th year, after which there is an average of 4–8 contracts per year until his regnal year 35. For years 35 and 36 of Ammi-ditana I found 17 and 14 tablets respectively, and for his last year there is a sudden rise in their number (49), followed by a dramatic decline to 18 in the first year of Ammi-ṣaduqa. Thereafter the number varies between 12 and 3 per year, with a sudden, if limited, increase to 21 texts in year 13 of Ammi-ṣaduqa. This phenomenon may be linked to political events. Ammi-ṣaduqa's *mīšarum* act[5] in his first regnal year may have improved the economic situation of the country, leading to a decline in the number of loans (Kraus 1984).

There are fewer field-lease contracts than loans in room 22: as far as I can see, their number did not exceed 50. Old field-lease contracts were not stored in the archive. Those which survive all date from the later years of Ammi-ditana until the end of Ammi-ṣaduqa's reign. Their distribution in time seems to be in line with the distribution of the administrative documents. It is also difficult to separate contracts belonging to the official administration from Ur-Utu's private activities.

4. The Real Estate Documents in the Ur-Utu Archive

There are 75 contracts related to the sale of real estate in rooms 17 and 22. Of these, 20 involve Ur-Utu (dated after year 5 of Ammi-ṣaduqa) and 20 involve his father Inanna-mansum (dated mainly to the last years of Ammi-ditana). Thirty-five sale contracts, however, are dated before Inanna-mansum became chief lamentation priest. They describe previous sales of real estate later bought by one of the two priests, and they were handed over at the moment of the sale, according to the letters and 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln' from the archive. The oldest of these sale contracts from rooms 17 and 22 are dated in the reign of Samsu-iluna (1750–1712 BC).

The earliest titles of ownership were found either buried under

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[5] A legislative act of the king to remedy economic malfunctions.

the floor of room 22 or in room 23 (group O). There are 27 sale contracts in group O, of which 19 were dated between Iluma-ila and Samsu-iluna. All precede the period during which Ur-Utu was chief lamentation priest. Related to these sale contracts are two inheritance documents, dated to Sin-muballiṭ and Samsu-iluna, and four 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln' replacing older lost contracts and dating to years 30 and 32 of Ammi-ditana, and year 12 of Ammi-ṣaduqa. These documents must have been extremely important for Ur-Utu in his litigation with his trouble-making family. Although we are inclined to believe Gasche and Janssen when they suggest that someone tried to save them during the fire and dropped them, we are still confronted with the fact that 25 tablets were buried in small holes under room 22 (cf. Figure 4.6), generally comparable with others of similar content. Among the group of 25 there are inheritance and division contracts as well as sales of real estate and prebends, mostly dated to Sin-muballiṭ and Samsu-iluna, together with related 'Quasi-Hüllentafeln'.[6]

5. Conclusions

Do the 2,000 tablets discovered in Ur-Utu's house really belong to an archive which was still in use when the house burnt down? At first glance it seems logical that there should be a relation between the fire and the survival of the 'archive'. One would expect that this catastrophe put an end to the use of the 'archive'. Janssen (1996: 245) suggests that an invasion of nomadic tribes during the last years of Ammi-ṣaduqa's reign may have caused the abandonment of the house. This seems implausible when one considers that the site of Tell ed-Dēr was not abandoned in year 18 of Ammi-ṣaduqa, the year in which the youngest tablet from the 'archive' is dated. The site was inhabited until at least year 4 or 6 of Samsu-ditana (CT 48, 45; BDHP 76; see also Gasche 1989: 114 n. 287) and a new chief lamentation priest was in office at the temple of Annunītum, which continued to function (Marduk-muballiṭ, CT 48, 45). At the Oxford workshop Professor Palaima pertinently remarked on the absence of skeletons in the house. This implies that the destruction

6 At the Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale at Leiden in 2002 Frans Wiggermann informed me that at Tell Sabi Abyad too a small part of the Middle Assyrian archive was buried in holes under the floors.

was not the consequence of a sudden disaster. May we conclude from the foregoing that Ur-Utu's 'archive', as it was discovered in 1974 and 1975, was no longer in use in antiquity, in contrast to what we have suggested elsewhere (Van Lerberghe 1982), and that what was found was the remainder of a once larger archive stored in an abandoned house that burnt down and collapsed later? A survey of the 1,855 texts yields the following provisional conclusions:

(1) The tablets were grouped according to their contents as well as their shape. All letters concerning Ur-Utu's litigation concerning his family's property were found in room 17 together with the related old titles of ownership of real estate. The six large lists containing the names of the performers of the *parṣū* rites—economically important for the temple—were stored in the same room together with the letters concerning these rites. The shape of the real-estate documents—the lists as well as the letters—was easily recognizable. Ninety-seven small-debt contracts involving individuals performing the *parṣū* rites come from room 22. They all have the typical *zeḫpum* shape and were most probably once part of a larger group of debt contracts with the same appearance.

(2) As became clear from other contributions to the workshop, the distinction between private and public cannot always be made. The 'archive' did not exclusively contain Ur-Utu's private documents. The majority of the texts are administrative documents of all kinds related to the economy of the temple of Annunītum at Sippar-Amnānum. Some link this temple with the temple of Šamaš at Sippar-Jaḫrurum and with the palace at Babylon.

(3) As might have been expected, a link between political events and the archiving of tablets can be recognized, although not easily explained. The chart of loan contracts (Figure 4.3) indicates a dramatic increase in the number of documents in the last year of Ammi-ditana. If one takes the view that the only loan contracts kept in an archive would be for debts which had never been settled, then it is tempting to relate this fact to the *mīšarum* edict which Ammi-ṣaduqa proclaimed in his first regnal year (Kraus 1984).

As noted above, it may be that this 'archive' is the remainder of a larger original. With this in mind it may be possible to explain the distribution of the tablets as shown in Figures 4.1–4.4. Inanna-mansum was chief lamentation priest of Annunītum until year 5 of Ammi-ṣaduqa, after which his son Ur-Utu took over. Figure 4.2

shows that a maximum of 10 administrative documents were kept from the period before Ammi-ṣaduqa. During the first 14 years of his reign 20 tablets per year is the average number. Then there is a decline during his last years. It is most plausible to assume that the administrative tablets written under Ammi-ditana had lost their importance and were no longer considered worth storing when Ammi-ṣaduqa became king. If there is truth to our suggestion that Ur-Utu's house was already abandoned in antiquity before it burnt down, then it seems not unlikely that those economic documents from the last years of Ammi-ṣaduqa which were still valid were taken out of the archive and stored elsewhere once Samsu-ditana came to power. By this time Marduk-muballiṭ, Ur-Utu's successor as chief lamentation priest, controlled the economic activities of the temple of Annunītum, and would have organized a new archive in his own house starting from Ammi-ṣaduqa's last years until the end of the Old Babylonian dynasty. This may explain the dramatic general decline in the number of tablets dated to that period (Figures 4.1–4.4).

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5

Archives of Old Assyrian Traders

KLAAS R. VEENHOF

1. The Archives of Kanish

Thus far about 20,000 Old Assyrian cuneiform tablets have been unearthed at the site of the ancient city of Kanish, the modern ruin Kültepe in central Anatolia, most of which date to the nineteenth century BC. While a few dozen tablets were discovered on the city mound, both in houses and in the ruins of the palace of the local rulers, the bulk of the texts originate from the lower city, inhabited by local businessmen, craftsmen, and foreign, mainly Assyrian, traders. Since the tablets from the city mound, the scattered and largely unpublished remains of various small archives, defy archival analysis, I shall focus on those from the lower city. They were found in what the Assyrians called the *kārum*, originally meaning 'quay, harbour' (in Mesopotamia, where bulk transport was waterborne), then also 'commercial district'. *Kārum* was used both as a topographical term—the name of the quarter where the traders lived—and as a designation of the organization of Assyrian traders settled there. As such it refers to a corporate body with executive powers, ultimately under the authority of the mother city of Assur. Its facilities included a secretary, rotating administrative officials (the *līmum* and the *hamuštum*, or week-eponym), and a building, called '*kārum* house', with an office and storerooms, where the *kārum* assembly convened to pass judgments. *Kārum* Kanish was particularly important as the administrative 'capital' of a network which ultimately comprised some 35 Assyrian colonies and smaller trading stations, for which it functioned as the centre of communications, of judicial activity, and of commercial operations, which

Note. For bibliography see p. 119.

entailed bookkeeping, storage, deposit and transfer of merchandise, and periodic settlements of accounts.[1] The dual meaning of *kārum* implies the existence of two kinds of archives, those of the individual traders and firms living there, stored in their houses, and those of the *kārum* organization, kept in the '*kārum* house'.

1.1. *The archives of the* kārum *house*

References to the '*kārum* house' occur frequently in the texts, but after fifty years of excavations this building has not yet been found.[2] To understand its role we have to rely on the information contained in documents found in private archives, including official records which somehow ended up there. In this section I mention some of its administrative and commercial tasks, which will help us in our analysis of the private archives, because the *kārum* organization had a great impact on the activities of the traders.

The *kārum* collected various fees and duties from the traders, which is a recurring topic in its correspondence with other colonies. A group of important traders, called 'big men', apparently the main members of the *kārum*, enjoyed special prerogatives in exchange for substantial financial contributions or investments. They were called 'men with an account', which implied that for them deposits, book transfers, and periodic settlements of accounts ('the accounting of the *kārum*', perhaps twice a year) could take the place of cash payments. This procedure is reflected in the (all too rare) references to the 'big tablet of/in the *kārum* house' of such traders.[3] Important were centrally organized and apparently profitable commercial enterprises arranged by the *kārum*, in which individual members could participate by 'depositing in the *kārum* house' specified amounts of silver or merchandise, whose revenues they would collect in due time, probably at the periodic settlements of accounts. Private letters describe these procedures, absent traders ask relatives or partners to make such deposits in their name, and we have

[1] The *kārum* organization has been studied in Garelli (1963), 171–204, and Larsen (1976), 227–365.
[2] It may have been located on the city-mound, which would have allowed the local rulers to check its activities.
[3] For 'the big tablet of/in the *kārum* house' see KUG 18. 1–9; VS 26. 46. 3–6; BIN 6. 156. 16 ff.; and KTS 2. 19. 5 ff. There is even a tantalizing reference to a trader's 'deposits [booked] on the third and the sixth tablet of the *kārum* house' (TuM 1. 27b), alongside many statements of the type 'I [am] registered for *x* silver at the *kārum* house' and references to debt claims owed to and by the *kārum*.

relevant administrative records. The *kārum* also played an important role in the economic traffic between local palaces and individual traders, especially as the institution to which the large amounts of copper paid by the palace for merchandise imported by the Assyrians were transferred. The resulting deposits were administered as 'funds' (called *suhuppum*) of particular firms or traders, from which they could draw their revenues. Creditors, by permission of the authorities, could occasionally recover claims from their debtors' shares in such a 'fund'.[4] All these activities imply the existence of a well-organized system of bookkeeping and accounting in the *kārum* house, probably administered by the secretary of the *kārum* and by its rotating administrative officers, which must have resulted in sizeable collections of records, its archives.

The prominent role of the *kārum* as court of law is reflected in the numerous verdicts it passed, in depositions (by parties and witnesses), records of interrogations and oaths, and in protocols of confrontations of parties before the *kārum*. In addition, official letters on judiciary matters were sent to, or received from, other colonies, written orders were sent out to persons summoned before the *kārum*, and credentials were supplied to messengers of the *kārum*, authorized to transfer funds, make decisions, and summon people. We know that by definition all judicial records of the *kārum* stem from private archives, in most cases—except when both parties in a lawsuit could acquire copies—of the party who had won the case and had obtained these records for evidentiary purposes.[5] But tablets with verdicts and depositions are not the only 'official records' found in private archives. They also contain 'binding tablets of the city' (*tuppum dannum ša ālim*), issued to a plaintiff in order to enable him to defend or obtain a right. Moreover, they included letters written by *kārum* Kanish to other colonies and even letters addressed by the ruler of Assur to the *kārum*, in both cases, it seems, where the texts concerned or ruled in favour of the archive-holder. An example is ICK 1. 182, which turned up in the archive of the trader Imdilum, apparently because it authorized Imdilum to hire an 'attorney' (*rābişum*).[6]

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[4] See for these features, as far as we understand them today, Dercksen (1996), 168–76.

[5] Part of them he may have supplied himself, as well as bearing the cost of summoning witnesses and recording testimonies.

[6] For the text see Larsen (1976), 177–8.

There is evidence that official records or letters were drawn up and circulated in more than one copy. The verdict by the city of Assur, sent to Kanish by and under the seal of the ruler of Assur and published as EL 327, was found in a private archive with its envelope still intact.[7] Although the text of the verdict written on the envelope turned out to be virtually identical to that of the tablet inside, it is very unlikely that this envelope would have remained unopened had it been the only copy sent to Kanish. It was probably a duplicate meant for the trader in whose favour the city had ruled, while another copy, as most such documents are, may have been in the form of a letter addressed to *kārum* Kanish. This is virtually certain in the case of a letter of King Šarrukin to *kārum* Kanish, in which he communicates a verdict of the city assembly, kt n/k 1925 (Veenhof 1995*b*: 1729–30), found in its unopened envelope in a private archive. It is inconceivable that this envelope, inscribed with the address only, would have been left unopened if the wording of the verdict were not already known from a duplicate. Proof is provided by comparing the texts kt n/k 560 and kt n/k 1384.[8] The latter is an unopened envelope on which is written 'Seal of the ruler. The city passed the following verdict in the sacred precinct [*hamrum*]' (ll. 1–3), followed by the verdict itself. The former is a tablet, found without its envelope and hence opened in antiquity, which has the same text as kt n/k 1384, but ends with 'a copy of this tablet, with the seal of the ruler, PN has brought you' (ll. 13–16), obviously a reference to kt n/k 1384. Uşur-ša-Ištar, the owner of the archive in which these texts were found, must have received from Assur both records, one of which (kt n/k 560) was presumably opened and read during his lawsuit, while he kept the other, with the royal seal, as valid evidence in his archive.[9] In this case we might even assume the existence of a third copy, addressed to the *kārum* authorities, eventually perhaps stored in the *kārum* archives.

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[7] It starts with the words 'seal of the ruler [*waklum*]. The city passed the following verdict . . .' (Larsen 1976: 175–6). The document, now in the Royal Scottish Museum at Edinburgh, was opened after its edition in EL.

[8] Kt n/k 560 was published as AKT 2. 21; kt n/k 1384 in Çeçen (1990), 42 ff.

[9] A similar procedure is attested for a private letter written by King Šarrukin to the trader Pušuken, POAT 18A–B, found in its envelope, which was opened for the edition. The letter itself mentions (ll. 17 ff.) that the ruler had sent two copies to Kanish, one of which should be 'heard' (i.e. opened and read), while Pušuken was advised to keep the other 'in his hand', presumably as proof of his mandate (it carried the royal seal), since it asked him to force an elusive old debtor of the ruler to pay a large amount of silver.

But we cannot prove this and even the address does not settle the matter, since this is the very address of the royal letter ICK 1. 182, mentioned above, which turned up in a private archive.

The presence of official documents in private archives can also be explained in some cases from the fact that its owner had at some time acted as an official of the *kārum*, as its representative (*līmum*, especially involved in financial matters) or secretary. Several official *kārum* letters were found in the archive of Kulia, excavated in 1992, who served as official messenger of the organization. It contained official letters addressed to other *kārum*s which he had to transmit, and those which had served as his credentials.[10] We have to assume that he had kept them after his tasks had been performed.[11]

There are indications that the *kārum* itself also preserved certain judicial records for evidentiary purposes, in part presumably duplicates of those found in private archives, but it remains unclear how extensive such holdings may have been. In TPK 193 we read about a search in the *kārum* archives: '[When] a tablet of the *kārum* was lost, we obtained access to the tablets of/issued by the plenary session of the *kārum* and inspected them, we searched [among] the tablets and we sealed them again.'[12] Occasionally private documents may also have been deposited and kept under seal in the archives of a *kārum* as security or for procedural reasons. According to TPK 44: 8 ff., a letter by *kārum* Kanish to *kārum* Durhumid, the sons of two deceased traders stated in an appeal to the *kārum*: 'Valid records [*dannātum*] of our fathers, sealed with the *kārum* seal, are in *kārum* Durhumid.' This *kārum* is now asked to have 'these tablets and

letters, identified by the names of A, B, C, and D, brought before them, to break the seals applied previously, to take cognizance of the letters, and to entrust them in a sealed packet, with the seals you will break inside, to the messenger of *kārum* Kanish'. This letter probably refers to the fact that, upon the death of the traders in question, some of their valuable records had been deposited in the *kārum*, in a container sealed by the *kārum*, pending a future settlement between relatives, partners, and creditors. We also read about tablets drawn up and kept in a *kārum* as validated reports of legal disputes, which in due time might be sent to the city of Assur, where a final decision had to be taken.[13]

While physical evidence of the *kārum* archives is still lacking, the references quoted leave no doubt that they existed. The reconstruction of the trade and its administrative procedures would greatly benefit from their discovery and warrants a systematic search by the excavators, taking into account the possibility suggested above (n. 2). In the meantime we have to depend on the information contained in the private archives of the traders.

1.2. *Private archives*

The houses which yielded the tablets are situated in the lower town, the commercial district or *kārum* of the city, and archaeologically belong to its Level II, which lasted more than 100 years, roughly from c.1945(?) until c.1835 BC. Many of these were owned and inhabited by Assyrian traders, others by local Anatolian families, craftsmen, and in particular businessmen. Some houses of the latter also yielded archives, but since they have not yet been published, we are obliged to ignore them here.[14] This is also the case with the c.250 tablets, only partly published, from perhaps a dozen small archives, of both Assyrian and Anatolian traders, which were discovered in the younger Level Ib of the *kārum* (approximately eighteenth century BC). This was a period marked by important changes in trade: the city was as big as during Level II, but the Assyrians played a much more modest role, which explains the lack of large archives.[15]

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[10] Some of them were published by Çeçen (1997). The credential kt 92/k 224, addressed to 'all colonies and commercial settlements up to the city of 'Tuhpia', tells its readers that Kulia 'is our messenger and has been sent with an urgent commission'. The colonies are asked to provide him with an escort to bring him safely to the next colony.

[11] His private archive also contained the tablet with the long list of Old Assyrian year-eponyms, kt 92/k 193, which looks like an official document (it has a colophon) and may have been for official rather than private use.

[12] I assume that a trader had lost a record issued to him by the *kārum* and tried to repair this loss by looking for a duplicate in the *kārum* archives. 'To get access to' renders the verb *patā'um*, lit. 'to open', which does not mean that the envelopes of encased tablets were broken (for breaking seals one uses the verb *šarāmum*: see also TCL 3, 99, quoted below in sect. 3.1); rather, it refers to the seals applied to a container with tablets (or to the door of an archival room), so that the tablets could be studied. The text written on the envelope of a legal document (especially of a contract, less systematically of depositions) was usually sufficient to allow identification. After the inspection the seals were renewed.

[13] See e.g. EL 325. 33–40 (where in l. 38 read *lūlappit'* 'it should write').

[14] For a small group of such texts from the archive of Aše'd see Donbaz (1988).

[15] For provisional remarks on these archives see Veenhof (1998), 440 ff., and for a sample of such texts from Anatolian archives, especially the kt n/k archive, Donbaz (1989; 1993).

The archives of Level II, not surprisingly, are predominantly of a commercial nature and document all aspects of the overland trade between Assur and Anatolia and inside central Anatolia, where the Assyrians had created a network which ultimately comprised at least 35 commercial settlements, including both important 'trading colonies', called *kārum*, and smaller 'trading stations', called *wabartum*. Since the trade was carried out by family firms based in Assur, which regularly sent hundreds of their menfolk to travel to and live in Anatolia—some of whom later brought their wives and children—the archives in various measure also document family life, in letters (especially those from and to women in Assur), a variety of contracts (marriage, divorce, wills), and judiciary records of litigation relating to family matters. Because a few dozen members of the second and third generation of Assyrian traders married local girls, some archives also document social and economic links with particular Anatolian families, which may help to explain the sometimes surprising presence of purely native Anatolian records in Assyrian archives. An explanation of this interesting phenomenon will be possible only when more such archives have been published, so as to allow a thorough prosopographical analysis.

Archival studies of ancient documents should be based on both archaeological and philological data, and an ideal starting point is the combination of a carefully excavated and recorded archive with a systematic and competent edition of all its records. For a variety of reasons this is rarely the case, and the so-called 'Kültepe texts' are no exception.

1.2.1. *Archives unearthed before 1948.* Before the start of the official Turkish excavations under the direction of Professor Tahsin Özgüç in 1948, for more than half a century a total of perhaps 5,000 tablets, unearthed by local villagers, were sold on the antiques market. This meant the absence of all archaeological data on findspots and archival coherence, the loss of many texts, in particular broken texts and envelopes,[16] and the separation of many tablets from their envelopes, which could be sold separately. In the process complete archives, some of which contained more than 1,000 tablets, were broken up and scattered over a few big and many smaller museums and collections. Now that most of these have been edited, copied, or at least traced, a reconstruction of the archives can be attempted.

[16] Not counting those acquired by private collectors which were never published or subsequently lost.

This is relatively easy for letters, debt-notes and other contracts, and judicial records, on the basis of the names of writers and recipients, creditors and debtors, and parties in contracts or legal disputes—notwithstanding some pitfalls, which will be addressed below. But for the numerous anonymous notes, memos, lists, and excerpts, called *Privaturkunden* in the edition of Ulshöfer (1995), archival classification is difficult, as I have pointed out (Veenhof 1997*b*). The owner or writer of these texts is at best hidden behind the many verbal forms of the type 'I/we gave/collected/owe/sent/entrusted/paid'.

In 1925, when the findspot of the texts had become known, a Czech expedition lead by B. Hrozný excavated an estimated 1,000 documents, now kept in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, and mostly published in the volumes ICK 1, ICK 2, KKS, and KTS 2. A substantial number belong to the archive of the prominent trader Imdilum, whose archive was reconstructed and studied almost simultaneously by Ichisar (1981) and Larsen (1982). While these first attempts at an archival approach yielded new insights, they had to remain partial and provisional. Many archaeological data on the tablets excavated by Hrozný had gone missing during the Second World War, and prior to his dig part of the archive had already been unearthed and sold by local diggers. Since hundreds of additional records from Imdilum's archives, especially in the collections of Prague and Berlin, were not yet available to Ichisar and Larsen, a completely new edition and analysis is now in order (see Hecker *et al.* 1998: xii–xvi).

In 1991 the systematic analysis and edition of another large group of texts stemming from the antiques market was published by Michel (1991), a study of two different traders called Innaja. Though wisely avoiding the word 'archives', she offers in her first volume a systematic analysis of their families, business, and functions, attested in the 277 texts edited in volume ii. While showing the potential of such studies, the book also demonstrates the problem of classifying and assigning texts in the absence of data on findspots. All texts containing information on both Innajas,[17] as well as those where they figure as week or year eponyms, are included, though most of the latter certainly did not belong to their archives. Others, especially many so-called *Privaturkunden*, were excluded if there was no way of deciding whether one of the Inna-

[17] For a number of texts it remains unclear which Innaja is meant.

jas was hiding behind the first-person forms used by the writers. Such problems can be solved only on the basis of complete, excavated, and published archives.

1.2.2. *Archives excavated since 1948.* The publication of the archives excavated since 1948, *c.*100 in number and now preserved in the Anatolian Civilizations Museum at Ankara, had just started when Michel (1991) was published. But the first two volumes, AKT 1 and 2 (from 1990 and 1995) are of little help, since they contain only small groups of records from two different, very large, archives excavated in 1948 and 1962. They also lack archaeological data on findspots, and (hence?) their authors did not attempt an archival reconstruction and analysis. The same is true of AKT 3, published in 1995, which contains the bulk (115 texts) of a small but very interesting archive of Ennum-Assur, excavated in 1970, but omits more than 40 tablets in sealed envelopes (which were assigned to another philologist), and likewise offers no archival analysis. All three volumes, moreover, lack illustrations of the seal impressions and sealed envelopes, so vital for prosopographical analysis, and of the sealed and inscribed *bullae* found with the texts. In addition, many complete envelopes were not opened, so that the tablets inside are not accessible.

The fourth volume of excavated texts, TPK, published in 1997 by Michel and Garelli, is a major improvement, though it could not include illustrations of seal impressions and *bullae*, and still contains a number of letters in unopened envelopes. It not only contains all the *c.*250 texts[18] of the main archive preceded by a prosopographic and archival analysis, but in its preface the director of the excavations also presents the archaeological data, with a ground plan of the house.

Several other archives are being studied and prepared for publication. In what follows I shall use all the relevant information found in published texts, including those which belong to the archives excavated in 1986 and 1991–2, which have been assigned to me for publication. Occasionally I shall refer to data kindly made available by K. Hecker and my Turkish colleagues of Ankara University, C. Günbattı, S. Bayram, and S. Çeçen, from the archives they are

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[18] About 50 are fragments of envelopes, some without writing. Without illustrations and further analysis it is impossible to determine whether they belong to tablets in the archive, and thus were broken as a result of the destruction of the archival room, or are the remains of envelopes opened in antiquity. See for this problem below, sect. 5.1.

studying. Data on *c.*160 seals and inscribed *bullae* are derived from Özgüç and Tunca (2001).[19]

An excavated archive obviously offers new insights, but at the same time raises questions, especially through the presence of records which we would not expect (see Section 5 below). Prosopographical analysis proves essential for identifying and dating persons and for revealing personal or business relations, which may account for the presence of certain records. But the large number of people involved, the extreme frequency of certain names, the general absence of patronymics in letters, and the problems of identifying owners of the usually uninscribed seals are difficult hurdles, made even higher by the fact that the great majority of the texts, especially letters, judicial records, memorandums, lists, and notes, are not dated. But I am fortunate in being able to use the new list of year-eponyms (Veenhof, in press) and a large new archive, whose owner thus far is the only Assyrian with the name Elamma, which also makes it easier to trace him in records from other archives.

2. Types of Archival Texts

Leaving inscribed *bullae* and sealings aside, we can distinguish three types of documents in private archives: letters, a variety of legal documents, and a mixture of lists, memos, and notes, called *Privaturkunden* in the edition by Ulshöfer (1995). This distinction relates to their nature, value (evidentiary or only informative), and function (aide-mémoire, legal instrument, means of communication), which again may correlate with their shape, structure, and style, and may condition whether they are protected and validated (by a sealed clay envelope or not) and stored in separate groups or containers in an archival room.

2.1. *Letters*

Letters, usually constituting about a third of the records in an archive, were essential for communication between traders living or working in Assur and Anatolia and the various cities and commercial settlements inside Anatolia. Letters contain an enormous amount of valuable information on the trade proper (goods, prices,

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[19] See also the observations in Veenhof (1993), 648 ff.

supply and demand, markets, costs, etc.), on persons involved in the trade (family members, partners, employees, and business contacts, both Assyrian and Anatolian, including Anatolian officials and palaces), and on a great variety of problems encountered (political, commercial, and financial ones, those resulting from legal action or private difficulties). A representative selection of 400 letters is now available in a French translation by Michel (2001), and the complete correspondence of Assurnada in an edition by Larsen (in press). Their informative value must have been the main reason for preserving them, apart from more personal motives (letters of family members, especially wives and children), which always played a role. Some letters may also have had evidentiary value, such as those called *našpertum* (see below).[20]

A useful distinction is that between standard letters, required by the system, and occasional ones. The first are essential for the caravan trade between Assur and Anatolia, to inform people at both ends of purchases and sales made and of shipments of merchandise or silver on their way with caravans. Those sent from Assur, frequently by 'your representatives' (*ša kīma kuāti*), mention prices and quantities of merchandise and caravan donkeys bought in Assur, together with the names and payments to the caravaneers (*kaṣṣārum*), expenses incurred, and the export tax paid. Larsen (1967) calls such letters 'notifying messages' and 'caravan accounts', the Assyrians themselves speak of 'tablets of purchases' (POAT 14. 21) and of 'letters from the city' (kt 91/k354. 3). Occasional letters were written for all kinds of reasons, frequently because there were problems or in order to pass on instructions or requests.

Letters are usually simply called 'tablets' (*ṭuppum*), a term used for all kinds of written documents, but we also meet the designation *našpertum* 'message', 'missive', which denotes a document written to be sent (*šapārum*) elsewhere (cf. Larsen 1977a: 97). Such 'messages' could sometimes have had legal or evidentiary value, if they contained a formal statement, authorization, order, or promise sent to a partner, agent, or business contact, which would allow him to undertake a particular action. In TPK 103. 11–12 a *našpertum* of A. sent to his representatives and S. brings about the release of tablets by S. to A.'s brother, and kt m/k 138 contains the request

[20] This applies to Old Babylonian letters; writers could advise recipients 'to preserve them as proof of my words': see Kraus (1985), 141 ff.

to (write and) seal such a *našpertum*, which is rejected. In ICK 2. 150. 5 ff. a trader promises to pay a copper debt to P. 'if a *našpertum* sealed by E., stating that he owes P. that copper debt, is brought'. In ICK 1. 59. 4 ff. D. tries to make A. pay by stating: 'Here is a *našpertum* of my brother, give me the *x* shekels of silver', but A. is ready to do so only if witnesses of his claim are produced. In kt 91/k 368. 20 ff. E.'s *našpertum* has to be read to the transporter A., who carries a lot of textiles, if he refuses to yield them. POAT 52 reports that 'the *našpertum* tablet[21] with my seal, [which records] that S.'s case is settled', has been entrusted to T. If, however, S. has not honoured the settlement by paying the silver, 'T. has to release the *našpertum* with my seal to me and I will retain my tablets'. Such 'missives', like 'valid deeds' (*ṭuppum harmum*), had to be handled with care and might be sent overland not just in their sealed clay envelope, but in a sealed packet, which could be entrusted to a third person or deposited in an archival room. Proof is also supplied by the words '*našpertum* of A. (to/for B.)', written on more than forty sealed *bullae* found in archival rooms. They must have served as labels originally attached to packets or bags containing such tablets in order to protect and identify them.

While most letters are private, many archives also contain a few official letters written by or to Assyrian authorities such as *wabartum*s, *kārum*s, the city of Assur, the ruler of Assur, and the 'envoys of the city' (cf. above, section 1.1). The discovery in private archives of 'diplomatic' letters from and to local rulers, which deal with (problems in) the political and commercial relations between Assyrians and Anatolians, requires a similar explanation. Messengers and representatives of the *kārum* must have retained copies of them in their archives (Garelli 1963: 329 ff.; Larsen 1976: 247 ff., ch. 2). Occasionally traders involved in such difficulties with local authorities (loss or confiscation of merchandise, fines or imprisonment, defaulting Anatolian debtors) may have received copies of letters dealing with their problems.

Letters can be easily classified on the basis of their address, but a trader's archive may also contain letters written by himself. Most contain copies of a number of important letters sent out, and some traders were more diligent in this respect than others. Imdilum refutes an angry partner's criticism of what he has written to him

[21] *Našpertum* is in apposition to *ṭuppum* 'tablet'.

by stating 'I keep copies of all letters which I send to you'.[22] There are also letters sent to Kanish by traders who resided elsewhere, temporarily or permanently, after their return to Assur in old age. Such a move could result in letters written by the ex-archive-holder to his son or partner in Kanish who had taken over the management of the Anatolian branch of the firm. The archive of Imdilum contains a number of such letters written to his son Puzur-Ištar.[23]

Of a few dozen letters we have more than one copy—usually two. Without information on their findspots it is difficult to say whether they were archive copies made by their writer, or duplicates,[24] i.e. letters sent off in more that one copy to one and the same or to different addressees. Those found with their envelopes still intact were presumably duplicates sent to the same addressee, one of which he kept in its envelope.[25] Several duplicates found without envelopes may represent letters sent off twice, separately, to ensure safe or the quickest possible arrival. This probably applies to the so-called 'caravan accounts', which report on the composition of a caravan leaving Assur, detailing quantities, prices, and costs. One copy would be sent ahead by messenger to inform the people in Kanish of what they could expect, in order to arrange the sale of the goods ahead of their arrival. The other would be taken along by the leader of the slower caravan.[26] Such letters also allowed the people in Kanish to check the goods delivered there for 'shortages' (*mutā'ū*), or to determine whether mistakes had been made in weighing or counting the goods in Assur.[27] The same procedure applied when silver and gold were sent to Assur. The shipment was

[22] CCT 2. 6. 6–15; read in ll. 11–12 *lūkallimūninnima lūba'išuni* 'let them put me to shame by showing them to me'.

[23] See for his archive above, sect. 1.2, and Hecker *et al.* (1999), xii–xvi.

[24] I call duplicates records with the same legal value, both documents originally encased in a sealed envelope—e.g. more than one copy of a sealed contract issued at the same time to various people. Copies, which could be written later, repeat the text of an original record, but in the absence of an envelope with seal impressions have no legal value. Tablets which are copies of sealed contracts can be easily recognized because they start, as do the original envelopes, by listing the seals impressed, which is never the case with an original tablet encased in an envelope. For letters the same distinction applies, but we cannot identify them because nearly all are found without their envelope and there are no structural differences between original and copy.

[25] I only mention the theoretical possibility of letters written but never sent.

[26] See for the procedure Larsen (1967), 96–7, with reference to TCL 3. 20. 38 ff. Two duplicates of the same, lengthy 'caravan account' are POAT 15 and LB 1200 (in Leiden), but since this letter also has two addressees, we do not know which solution applies—a copy for each of them or a letter sent twice?

[27] For references see Veenhof (1972), 18 ff.

specified in a transport contract but also mentioned in letters sent ahead, such as TCL 3. 36, which states (ll. 18 ff.): 'We checked the rest of the packet and it proved to contain only 14 pounds and 37 shekels of silver, 1 pound less than stated in your letter [*našpertum*].'

Most archives contains two special types of documents which also belong to the category of letters. The first are the so-called 'second pages', complete tablets which start without an address and seem to be the continuation of a letter, such as ICK 1. 183 (34 lines) and TPK 68 and 69. How they were sent is not clear, because hitherto none has been found in an envelope. Then there are so-called 'supplements to the tablet' (*ṣibat ṭuppim*), in the shape of a small, round or oval, thin piece of clay written on the convex side, added to a fully inscribed tablet when the writer had underestimated the length of his message. The supplement was placed on the tablet on its flat, uninscribed side and together they were encased in an envelope, one side of which might thus have a more bulging shape. To warn the addressee one could write in the letter or on the envelope: 'There is a supplement to this tablet.' Separated from the main tablet after the envelope had been opened, such 'supplements' usually defy archival classification, unless the 'supplement' has received on its semi-dry flat side a negative impression of the main tablet, thus allowing the pair to be reunited.[28] A rare alternative to making supplements was to write the final lines of a letter (occasionally also a summary or appendix) on its envelope, under the address.[29] TPK 75, a fragment of the envelope of the letter TPK 46, is hitherto unique in repeating the last word of the tablet ('their answer'), perhaps a device to indicate that the text of the tablet is continued on the envelope.

A special problem is the rather large number of letters in private archives which are not addressed to the archive-holder or close members of his family who lived in his house. This will be discussed below in Section 5.2.

[28] As was the case with BIN 6. 42 and KTS 40. Examples of supplements are BIN 6. 42–5 and 47, of complete sets (tablet, supplement, and envelope) CTMMA no. 78a–c; ICK 1. 17a–c, 31a–c, 39a–c; KTS 2. 9+67+Ka 1118. See for a 'bulging' envelope *ATHE* 25 and for textual references to supplements e.g. CCT 5. 2b. 19–20; ICK 1. 31a. rev. 4–5 and Cole Collection no. 9. 39 (unpubl.) mention that 'there is a supplement to the tablet' (*ṣibat ṭuppim ibašši*).

[29] See for examples BIN 6. 10a; ICK 1. 33a; POAT 18n.

2.2. *Legal documents*

This category comprises two types of record. The first are contracts and records of transactions completed before witnesses, attested in great variety. Most numerous are debt-notes, usually for silver, gold, or copper, mostly resulting from credit sale, some from straight loans. Next come service contracts with caravan personnel, who received an interest-free silver loan, called *be'ulātum*, the acceptance of which bound them to their employer.[30] Other categories are transport contracts, quittances, deeds recording investments, guaranty, pledging, deposit, transfer of debts, settlement of accounts, partnerships, or agreements of co-operation. In addition there are a number of family law documents, recording adoption, marriage, divorce, and wills. Most sale documents (now numbering more than a hundred) deal with slaves and houses,[31] hardly ever with transactions in the main trading goods such as textiles, silver, gold, tin, copper, and wool, since cash sale to Anatolians did not produce contracts and credit sale only debt-notes in silver. The names of the contracting parties help us to assign such documents to the archives of the creditors, investors, employers, moneylenders, and others, but all archives also contain contracts whose likely owner (e.g. the creditor, buyer, the one who pays) is not identical with the archive-holder, a problem to be addressed below.

Persons who assumed a liability (e.g. debt, guaranty, service, deposit, transport, confirmation) renounced a claim, or stated a fact (in quittances, settlements, sales, acknowledgements of existing liabilities) impressed their seals on the clay envelopes which protected and validated such tablets.[32] Encased 'valid deeds' (*ṭuppum harmum*) also contained the impressions of the seals of those present as witnesses, which may account for the fact that occasionally they might be called 'tablets of witnesses' (*ṭuppū ša šībē*), a designation usually reserved for depositions resulting from private summonses or testimonies given in court.[33]

The second type is a great variety of judicial documents, con-

[30] Its key phrase is that the employee 'is held by the silver' (*išti kaspim ukâl*).

[31] The older ones, unearthed before the official excavations, are edited and analysed in Kienast (1984).

[32] See in general for the sealing practices, apart from Larsen (1977a), Teissier (1994), who also gives an overview of the various types of records which were sealed and of the persons who impressed the seals.

[33] Envelopes of such tablets start by enumerating the seals impressed ('Seal of A. son of B.'). Four unpublished records (perhaps also TPK 109. 3) express this by the

sisting of private and official records, which reflect the interests of the archive-holder. Representative selections are found in EL (238–341) and in Michel (2000). The presence of official documents in private archives shows that a plaintiff who won his case obtained the complete file for his archives, not only because of their evidentiary value for him, but also because he had incurred costs to summon witnesses, supply depositions, or perhaps to hire an 'attorney' (*rābi ṣum*) to gain his case. Such files contained both private records of summonses, interrogations, depositions, and testimonies, and official documents such as provisional and final verdicts of courts of law (by 'trading stations', *kārums*, and by the city assembly in Assur). Also found among them are 'strong tablets of the city' supplied to a plaintiff to help him to obtain his right, and even official letters of the ruler and the city, addressed to a *kārum*, such as ICK 1. 182, mentioned above (Section 1.1. at n. 6).

Most numerous are hundreds of witnessed depositions, called 'testimony' (*šībūtum*), which are of two types. The first results from private summonses and/or arbitration. Some start by stating that a plaintiff 'seized' (*ṣabātum*) his opponent in front of witnesses, many more that he 'seized' witnesses against his opponent, or that both parties 'in mutual agreement' seized witnesses or arbitrators to hear their statements and reach a settlement.[34] Nearly all are in the form of a first-person account, rarely by the plaintiff himself ('I seized PN'), usually by the witnesses or arbitrators seized by him or by both parties ('PN1 [and PN2, by mutual agreement] seized us'). Hence they are testimonies in the form of written and signed (sealed) narrative reports on the dialogue, interrogation, arbitration, or settlement which had taken place in the presence of those speaking.

The second type is basically of the same structure, but resulted from formal lawsuits before a *wabartum* or *kārum* court. At the end they add that the testimony in question had been given because the court, as a standard formula expresses it, 'had given us to render testimony in this affair before the dagger of Assur'. They reflect the second stage of the judiciary procedure, started when a 'case had not been finished' during or in consequence of a private summons or

words 'A. and B. lie on the tablet' (*ina ṭuppim nâlū*); TPK 120a. 13–14 has 'A. and B. have sealed for/as testimony' (*aššībūtim kankū*).

[34] For the rather complicated procedures and the variety in form, status, and occasion of these 'testimonies' see Veenhof (1991).

the solution agreed upon had not been implemented. The plaintiff would then bring it before a formal court, which would first of all summon the witnesses/arbitrators of the earlier private summons to testify about what had happened before.[35] In the standard formula, instead of the words 'we gave our testimony before the dagger of Assur', we occasionally meet the words 'we gave a/our tablet'. This applies to cases where there already existed a written deposition of the earlier private summons or witnesses resided elsewhere and their testimony had been recorded in writing.

Some of the preserved envelopes of such depositions (e.g. EL 243) also mention court witnesses, assigned by the court to 'hear the statement' (lit. 'mouth') of the factual witnesses. The latter had to give testimony under oath, before the statue of the god Assur, in a special locale (called *hamrum* or 'the gate of the god'), to which the court witnesses accompanied them. Having heard their testimony, they validated (sealed) the envelope which contained the deposition of the factual witnesses, who also applied their seals.[36]

Great care was taken to make declarations under oath, by parties and witnesses, as clear and unambiguous as possible. Some archives contain tablets which carefully formulate what a person (usually a party in a conflict) has to declare under oath, and they are of two types. One starts with the words 'PN will swear', followed by the contents of the oath and continues by mentioning what the juridical effects of the oath will be ('he will swear and then . . .'); such texts probably reflect the solution of a conflict worked out by an arbitrator (cf. AKT 3. 36). Others contain the very words of the oath, beginning with the invocation 'Listen, god/goddess of the oath', followed by a first-person statement in the subjunctive (the mode used in oaths).[37] They may have been drafted by the judges or the plaintiff, to make sure that the statement under oath would

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[35] The procedure is similar to that attested for the Old Babylonian period, where according to Dombradi (1996), i, § 409, the formal procedure probably also started by repeating the complaint and claim made during an earlier private action, also called 'seizing' one's opponent (analysed in §§ 393 ff.). Old Assyrian courts could grant parties up to six months' grace to produce written evidence or witnesses, no doubt because of the logistic problems of rendering justice in a society of travelling traders based in Assur and Anatolia.

[36] The procedure with two types of witnesses—material or factual witnesses and court witnesses—has a precursor in the Ur III period: see Oh'e (1979).

[37] Published examples are EL 284 and CCT 5. 14b; men had to swear by Assur's dagger, women by the symbol of the goddess Ištar.

be clear and comprehensive. Standard depositions never contain these phrases.

Most archives also contain copies, excerpts, and even drafts of such depositions or testimonies. Apparently both parties, and perhaps other persons indirectly involved in such legal disputes, could obtain the text of depositions important for them. Copies may be private ones, inscribed on a tablet without the seals of the witnesses and hence without legal force, or sealed duplicates.[38] The resulting profusion of judicial records can be explained from the economic importance and commercial complications of the issues at stake, which might involve or interest several persons, and people absent might have to be informed by means of copies or duplicates. Before a lawsuit started, parties had to find and secure ('make hard', *dannunum*) their witnesses, to make sure that they would come to render the testimony required, or send it in written form. Since depositions by witnesses, especially those concerning earlier private confrontations or arbitration, were as a rule in the form of one single written testimony sealed by all (usually two to four) witnesses present, they must have required prior consultation and co-ordination. Drafts, non-identical copies, and excerpts which surface in various archives reflect these complications.[39] Finally, several lawsuits were conducted in stages and some might end up (by necessity or through appeal) before the court of the city assembly in Assur, which required the production and transfer of written documentation bearing on the earlier stages of the conflict.

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[38] For the distinctions between the two see above, n. 24.

[39] Complications could arise, as is clear from POAT 9, where D. accuses A. of giving a wrong and unsolicited testimony. A. defends himself by declaring (ll. 11 ff.): '*Kārum* Tawinia appealed to us and made us testify, whereupon I and my colleague [M.] gave the tablet [containing our testimony]'. M. added: 'When we gave the tablet of [the testimony recorded in] the gate of the god, my colleague called to my mind a few words [facts], which I no longer knew, on which I made him swear an oath. Then we added the words which he had called to my mind.' In the letter kt 92/175. 4–5 we read: 'Look over there for the document [which records] that we settled the affair of E. and A., either in the possession of the lady or among the tablet(s) with our seals, to be given to him so that he can learn that his affair has been settled. If it is not available, we remember [things] [*mukāl*] and you there must also write down what you remember, so that it becomes one single statement of us [*awatni ana ištêt lītūr*] and then we will tell him (the outcome of) his affair here.' The writer of BIN 4. 70. 17–18 states that he will not take juridical action 'until I obtain a tablet [with a statement] of two witnesses in agreement [*šībē 2 ētamdūtim*]'.

2.3. *Notes, memos, lists*

These are texts without legal or evidentiary force, neither wit-
nessed nor sealed, though some mention witnesses in whose pres-
ence transactions recorded had taken place. They were written as
aide-mémoires for their writer/owner and usually make up 20–30
per cent of the total number of archival texts. They range in size
from small tablets with only 2–5 lines of script to long lists and huge
memorandums, which detail all of a trader's debt claims still to be
collected, and at times long overdue. Some of the latter contain
up to a hundred lines of script and include claims dated to many
different years. The subject matter of these texts is extremely var-
ied, but favourite topics are lists of payments made, textiles sold,
expenses incurred during a caravan trip, and merchandise or sil-
ver deposited in the *kārum* house. Important are those texts which
list all the packets (*nēpišum*, *riksum*) of gold, silver, and other valu-
able items (including gifts to women) entrusted to a transporter for
shipment to Assur. The big memorandums on outstanding debt
claims (*bābtum*), usually in the form of excerpts of the original
debt-notes, offer important insights into the scale and dates of a
trader's business and provide scores of names of his business con-
tacts. Important are detailed accounts of expenses made during
caravan journeys (taxes, tolls, bribes, gifts, food, lodging, crossings,
replacement of dead donkeys, hire of additional personnel), spec-
ified for the successive stages of the trip, from one town to the
next.[40] They were drawn up by the leader of a caravan, who had
to account for the use of silver or tin he had received to cover ex-
penses en route. Lists which specify the value (*awītum*) of lots of
merchandise of different traders who shipped their goods with one
caravan, which served as the basis for charging them a proportional
share of the total expenses, fulfil a similar function. Lists referring
to the distribution of silver, textiles, bread, meat, and drinks reveal
something about the social fabric of the trading community. Many
small tablets are memos (in Assyrian *tahsistum*, from the verb 'to
remember') on individual transactions,[41] probably to be digested
later in bigger lists or accounts.

About 600 of these texts, mainly those unearthed before the of-

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[40] Because there is a correlation between the size of the payments and the distance
covered, they are used to reconstruct the itineraries of the caravans: see Veenhof
(1972), ch. 13; Nashef (1987).

[41] The expression *tahsistam nadā'um* means 'to make a note, a booking'.

ficial excavations, have recently been edited by Ulshöfer (1995),
who calls them *Privaturkunden* and divides them into twelve
groups. Their classification is not always easy, and we have problems
in matching our typology with the designations used in the ancient
sources, where specific designations, such as 'memorandum', occur
alongside general terms like 'tablet' and 'copy/duplicate' (*mehrum*).
Kt 88/k 269. 18 ff.[42] calls the (private?) copy of a 'valid record'
(*ṭuppum harmum*, hence in a sealed envelope), which contains the
official verdict of a *kārum*, a 'memorandum' and adds that (another)
copy of it was left behind together with the (original) 'valid record'.
Many private copies of all kind of records were produced to mul-
tiply or save information. Copies of sealed debt-notes were made
when the originals had to be sent overland (EL 224. 37–8; 225. 47–
8; 226. 49–50), or when an agent needed their data in order collect
payment from the debtors: 'Leave me your copy and I will collect
the silver and send it after you' (CCT 2. 38. 7 ff.). The writer of the
letter *Prague* I 545, having settled accounts with Z., states: 'I gave
a copy of it in the town of Zalpa to P. and he brought it to I. and
E., and I myself keep another copy.' The presence of such copies in
excavated archives can only be explained through prosopographi-
cal analysis, which will reveal contacts between the archive-holder
and the person(s) mentioned in the text. Classification, moreover,
requires a good *Urkundenlehre*, which still has to be written for
Old Assyrian, though there are already many observations in the
scholarly literature, especially in EL, Eisser (1939), and Veenhof
(1985; 1991).

While these *Privaturkunden* contain an enormous amount of in-
formation, the problem is that they are largely anonymous: this
applies even to some of the big memorandums listing many debt
claims. If they are not simple lists, they tend to use verbal forms in
the first-person singular (rarely plural)—'I gave, paid, deposited,
entrusted, settled accounts', etc.—and deprived of their archival
context, as those edited in Ulshöfer (1995) are, it is difficult to iden-
tify their writers/owners, which seriously reduces their informative
value. It is possible to assign longer texts which mention many
names (e.g. of relatives, employees, business partners) to particu-
lar traders, firms, or archives (cf. Veenhof 1998*b*), but it requires a
lot of prosopographical research. Most such texts have informative

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[42] Published in Bayram and Çeçen (1995), 11 ff.

value only in the context of a complete, excavated archive, which allows us to determine or to guess who wrote them.

2.4. *Fragments of envelopes*

Finally, not as a formal category but as a group which poses special problems, I mention the hundreds of fragments of envelopes of tablets. Some have bits of text and impressions of seals, others only seal impressions, still others neither of the two, but on their inside (vague) negative impressions of the writing on the tablet which they once encased. Their identification and use are only possible with the help of drawings or photographs, which are lacking in the four volumes of officially excavated texts published thus far. Identification of the owners or users of seals, though not easy, is sometimes possible and very helpful for archival studies.[43] One should at least determine whether we have to do with originally intact envelopes, broken and perhaps scattered by the destruction of the archive building, or with fragments of envelopes broken in antiquity, i.e. leftovers from tablets opened by the archive-holder himself, especially in the case of debt-notes (see below, Section 5.1).[44] In both cases successful attempts to read the negative impression of the text on the inside of the envelope are helpful, especially if it belongs to the address of a letter.[45]

3. Storage of Records and Organization of Archives

Both excavation reports and ancient texts provide us with information on the value, storage, protection, and retrieval of tablets and on the organization of archives, a subject which deserves a special study. Unfortunately, the information in the excavation reports is usually of too general a nature to be very helpful. Detailed descriptions of discoveries made in archival rooms, correlated with their ground plans and the inventory numbers of individual tablets as found *in situ*, are rare and thus far only available for the archive

[43] See Teissier (1994), and the observations in Veenhof and Klengel-Brandt (1992), 54–5.

[44] Is it likely that the archive-owner, if he opened a tablet, simply dropped the pieces of the envelope on the floor of his archival room and left them there?

[45] See Veenhof and Klengel-Brandt (1992), 30–1, on nos. 168 ff.; cf. also TPK 242.

excavated in 1990 and published in TPK. The separation between archival texts and the *bullae* and sealings found with them, originally attached to packets, containers, and perhaps the doors of the rooms, is unfortunate. Nevertheless, the data which are available, in combination with those on the *bullae* in Özgüç and Tunca (2001), allow us to draw a general picture.

3.1. *Value and protection of records*

As excavations and texts reveal, the tablets were usually kept in a special 'sealed room' (*maknukum*) or strongroom (*maṣṣartum* 'guarded place'), also used to store valuable merchandise and accessible through a solid, sealed wooden door. This prevented unauthorized access and is an indication of the value attached to the records, especially the 'valid deeds' (*ṭuppum harmum*). These are witnessed and sealed contracts or depositions, written on a tablet encased in a clay envelope, which (frequently in addition to a summary of the text) carries the impressions of the seals of those who accepted a liability, renounced a right, acquired a title, made a deposition, or acknowledged a fact (a claim, the settlement of an account, a payment), hence records with legal and evidentiary value. Especially valuable were the sealed debt-notes which were the legal and physical proof of at times substantial debt claims, whose intrinsic value turned them into a kind of 'clay money', usable as security and under certain circumstances transferable by the creditor (cf. Veenhof 1997*a*: 351–64).

Access to an archive, in the absence of the creditor and archive-holder, was restricted to close relatives and official partners or representatives. Others needed authorization by the *kārum* or the city assembly in Assur. This is clear in cases where investors, creditors, and relatives urgently required information on assets and debts of a trader who had died, eager to collect his or their claims and to prevent his merchandise or money from lying unused, awaiting a final liquidation or division. The authorities tried to prevent individual, selfish actions by specific rulings—'no one shall touch anything until . . .'—but were ready to help those with legitimate interests if they followed strict rules and assumed responsibility for their actions. In such cases a committee of three to five impartial 'outsiders' (*ahiūtum*) would be formed, which was authorized to break the seals (of the strongroom and the tablet-containers) in order to inspect or

to take out certain records. Such a committee had to accompany those who had requested permission to inspect the archive (e.g. the sons, investors, or creditors of the deceased). They had to draw up a protocol of what they had done and seen, and were required to seal containers and strongroom again after they had finished their job. I quote from two letters to illustrate this procedure.

In TC 3. 99. 6 ff. B., son of the dead trader P., writes to no fewer than eight persons, probably business contacts of his dead father:

'Read out the tablet of the city to the *kārum*, and then take three outsiders and enter my father's house, the old one, open the storeroom [*huršum*] of A. [B.'s brother], get access to [*patā'um*, lit. 'open'] the seals of his representatives, break [*šarāmum*][46] their seals and let the three-man committee (afterwards) apply their seals. And the three coffers [*tamalakkū*] with tablets of our father P., open (these coffers to get access to) these tablets. Inspect them and one tablet about 40 pounds of silver being I.'s joint-stock [*naruqqum*], a second tablet about 30 pounds of silver, the trading capital of E, one tablet of 5 pounds of silver, the debt of E_2 [I., E_1, and E_2 are brothers], one tablet of 5 pounds of silver the debt of P., and one tablet of $4\frac{2}{3}$ pounds of silver, the debt of N., [make/take the] copies of all these tablets . . . and entrust them to [   ] to bring them here.

In AKT 3. 85. 13 ff. E., who has a debt claim on M., answers a letter of his agent, who had told him that he could not get access to assets of M. (in the form of debt-notes recording claims of M.), since they were deposited in the house of another trader, A. He gives him the following instruction:

Appeal to the *kārum* and [with its authorization] take three outsiders and let them get access to the tablets [in the house of A.] and personally [lit.'your own hand'] take the tablet recording a debt of L., according to which he owes 11 pounds of silver to M., and send me your report. I will be as glad as if you had made me a gift of one talent of silver!

Such an authorization could be given by the *kārum* in the form of a formal verdict, as is clear from ICK 2. 153. A published example is EL 274, where the task of the committee which accompanies the investors (*ummeānū*) and the sons of (the dead trader) S. is 'to take cognizance of' (*lamādum*) S.'s tablets. In CCT 5. 3a. 27 ff. a similar committee consisting of five 'outsiders' accompanied the persons who acted 'under the responsibility of the investors' when they opened a dead trader's strongroom. An 'attorney' (*rābiṣṣum*), too,

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46 See n. 12 above for the use of these two different verbs.

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assigned to plaintiffs by the city assembly (if a first evaluation had shown them to have a strong case), could be authorized to inspect documents in archives. His authorization would be embodied in a 'tablet of the city', which may also have served as his credentials and might stipulate that the local *kārum* had to assist him.[47]

The value attached to legal documents is also clear from instructions to pack them carefully and to entrust them to reliable traders if they have to be sent elsewhere. A trader's will, according to POAT 19, has to be wrapped in reed, debt-notes and copies of other bonds, according to AKT 3. 82, have to be shipped in a solid packet (*qīšāšunu*[48] *dannināšunu*) and to be put into a leather bag (?) of good quality, while kt n/k 405 (unpubl.) asks to send a debt-note wrapped carefully in a (piece of a) woollen fleece. A few large records listing series of debt claims mention at the end that they are copies of 'valid deeds' (*ṭuppum harmum*), made because the originals had to be sent overland (e.g. to a partner or agent who had to collect the claims, or perhaps to Assur), or that copies were made because of reluctance to risk the loss of the valuable originals (cf. Section 2.3 above; Veenhof 1985).

3.2. *Storage and grouping of records*

Large archives, such as those of the main traders, some of which comprised more than a thousand records, require proper classification and systematic storage to be usable. This applies not only to their owners, who had to consult and retrieve documents, but also to their agents, relatives, and representatives, when they were asked to do the same during the absence of the owner. An efficient system was even more important when a single archival room contained lots belonging to various persons, even 'strangers' (see below, Section 5.2).

The archaeological record, more detailed for the earlier excavations at Kültepe than for the later ones, repeatedly mentions that groups of tablets were found at particular *loci* in an archival room, stored in various ways. Some are said to have fallen from shelves along the wall, others were found in jars, baskets, wooden boxes,

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47 For the 'attorney' see Larsen (1976), 184 ff.

48 The exact meaning of the verb *k/q-'/j-š*, used with tablets as object, is not known. It is attested in the basic stem (imperative pl. *ki/qi-ša*, AKT 3. 82. 24–5, with commentary) and in the doubled stem (imperative sg. *kà/qá-i-iš*: see AKT 3. 104. 12 and CTMMA 84. 47).

bags, and sacks or wrapped in reed mats (cf. Özgüç 2001). Describing the archive excavated in 1992, the excavator states:

the archive of the merchant was found along the base of the east wall of room 3 and rooms 4–5, in groups once packed in boxes, bags, sacks and straw mats. On top of each group lay one or more *bullae*. Unopened envelopes of each group were placed at the bottom, tablets on top. In contrast to other archives, here we did not find tablets stored in jars. (Özgüç 1994: 369)

Such important information, however, is only usable if the individual lots, their positions, and the inventory numbers of their tablets are given, together with those of the *bullae* which belonged with them. Such information is now for the first time available with regard to the main archive found in 1990 in the house at grid LVIII–LIX/132–3, in the preface to TPK. It contains the ground plan of the house and distinguishes two groups of tablets, whose inventory numbers are given: 75 found on the floor of the room, and 184 (including four inscribed *bullae* not edited in TPK) in the debris which filled the room. While most of the former were fragile and humid, the latter are said to have been dried and baked by the fire which destroyed the house, and it has been suggested that they may have fallen from a second floor.[49]

As indicated in the quotation above concerning the archive of 1992, the excavators also found many *bullae*, sealed pieces of clay used as labels and presumably attached to containers and packets, and perhaps also used to seal doors; many of these also have a short text. They must reflect transfer, shipment, or storage, and their seal impressions identify owners, senders, recipients, and/or the contents of the packets or containers, many of which apparently contained tablets (cf. Veenhof 1993).

Texts also reveal that particular groups and types of records were stored separately. Many records mention tablets in 'boxes' (*tamalakkū*: henceforth *t.*) or another type of container (*ṣil(l)iānu*, attested only in Old Assyrian, exact meaning unknown). Both are regularly said to be sealed and found in the strongroom (*maṣṣartum*) of a house, and to be used for storing and the former also for shipping tablets. They may occur in large numbers (there are references

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[49] The authors of TPK apparently did (could?) not use this distinction for their analysis of the archive. Note, however, that tablet 10a was found in the debris, but its envelope, 10b, on the floor, and that according to Özgüç and Tunca (2001), 220, this archive of Šumiabia would also have included the first group of texts excavated in 1992, among which were 11 *bullae*.

to up to 12 *t.*), were probably of various sizes ('a big *t.*' in AKT 3. 104. 17), and more importantly, they could be distinguished according to the type of tablets they contained. AKT 3. 106. 12 (together with some other texts) mentions '*t.* with/for encased tablets' (*ṭuppū harrumūtum*), AKT 3. 77. 7 'a *t.* with big tablets for the (caravan) journey', BIN 6. 18. 8 '*t.*s with memorandums' (*taḥsisātum*); and BIN 4. 36. 25–6 speaks of 'memorandums and tablets with sworn depositions [lit. 'of the gate of the god'] sealed in *t.*s'. Kt 91/k 147. 29 ff. lists thirteen tablets 'placed in a new *t.*, which have not been certified' (i.e. provided with seals, *ḥarmum*), AKT 3. 84. 9 mentions a *ṣiliānum* 'which contains the tablet of the gate of the god', and AKT 3. 82. 4 refers to a *ḥušālum* (meaning unknown) with tablets, among which was an 'open memorandum' (without envelope).[50]

This picture of archival organization is confirmed by the texts inscribed on *bullae* found together with the archival texts and edited in Özgüç and Tunca (2001). I have already mentioned the many *bullae* in the form of labels which identify particular (packets with) tablets as 'message [*našpertum*] of A (to B)' (see above, Section 2.2). Many other inscribed *bullae* do the same with other tablets in the packets or containers to which they were once affixed. We read, for example, about 'tablets of the city', 'tablets which are copies of . . .', 'encased tablets of PN', 'copies of encased tablets', 'tablets of the affair of PN', 'tablets of the will of PN', 'testimony of PN', 'tablets of PN', 'tablet of the debt of PN', 'tablet of Anatolians' (lit. 'natives'). Many labels apparently identified (and occasionally even communicated the contents of) single tablets, several others were attached to containers holding groups of tablets of a particular kind. Not surprisingly, prosopographical links are found between some of the *bullae* bearing the inventory numbers kt 91/k 112–22 and records in the same archive. The sealed hemispheroidal *bulla* kt 86/k 158, with an inscription of 14 lines, must originally have been attached to a packet which contained the sealed deposition preserved as kt 86/k 171, since it summarizes its contents and mentions the persons who had sealed its envelope (cf. Özgüç and Tunca 2001: 332).

Correlation of information on findspots with data contained in

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[50] Many of the references in AKT 3 are in letters addressed to the lady Nuhšatum (frequently in conjunction with one or two men), the wife of the owner of the archive. While he was regularly away for business, she probably stayed at home to guard the house, and had to deal with requests and instructions concerning tablets in the archive.

excavated tablets and *bullae* will certainly give us a better in-
sight into the organization of the archives. All three sources reveal
that the distinction between tablets with and without sealed en-
velopes was an important and obvious one. It was already noted
by Larsen (1982: 215 ff.), when he observed that the properly ex-
cavated records from Imdilum's archive consisted mainly of his
debt-notes, while those unearthed and marketed by local diggers
comprised few debt-notes and most of the letters. The official and
unofficial excavators had apparently been digging up different cor-
ners of the same archival room. Studying the tablets of Elamma's
archive in the order of their inventory numbers (which in general
must reflect the order in which they were taken out of the soil),
I noticed a few groups with consecutive numbers which consist
almost exclusively of tablets in envelopes (kt 91/k 386–407, 468–
80; kt 92/k 162–73), and this is also the case with other archives
for which we have data. Nos. 153–88 of a relatively small group
(*c.*80 tablets) excavated in 1986 are almost all 'certified tablets' in
envelopes of various kinds—many debt-notes, some quittances, ser-
vice contracts, and agreements, one record about the cancellation of
a tablet, one house sale, and one verdict. Apparently the single fact
that all were in sealed envelopes caused them to be stored together,
probably in one single container. The same is true of the group of
tablets in envelopes constituted by kt k/k 60–74, excavated in 1959
(information supplied by K. Hecker).

Indications for the existence of other groups are not so easy to
find, but the large group kt 91/k 318–46, with only a few exceptions,
consists of small notes, lists, and memos. The rest of the 1991
archive, to judge from the inventory numbers, consists of small
groups of letters and legal documents, alongside a considerable
mix of all types of documents. This situation of course also reflects
the state in which the tablets were found, in destroyed, at times
severely burnt houses, in a room filled with debris, compressed
under later levels of building (Level *kārum* Ib), whose foundations
are also responsible for damage and disturbance. As the excavator
has told me, the task of getting the many unbaked and at times
fragile and clustered tablets out of the soil is so demanding that it
is difficult to do it in such a way that the inventory numbers always
exactly reflect the archival disposition, unless a group of tablets was
found in an undamaged jar. A better awareness of what the texts
tell us about archival storage and classification, and the constant

presence at the dig of an epigraphist, able to identify each tablet
when it comes out of the soil, could help to answer our questions.

4. Completeness and Time Range of Archives

4.1. *Complete archives?*

An important question is how complete an excavated archive is,
because its answer affects the archive's use as a historical source.
Secondary use and hence selective preservation of archival texts is
not rare, as is shown by the discovery of older tablets, from the times
of his predecessors Jahdunlim and Jasmachaddu (*c.*1810–1776 BC)
in the palace of Zimrillim (*c.*1775–1761 BC) at Mari (Veenhof 1986*b*:
8 ff.). We are tempted to consider that an archive is complete when
careful excavation has unearthed all the texts present in one particu-
lar locale, as left behind when the archival room was destroyed or
abandoned, which seems very likely if this was due to a sudden cata-
strophe. Still, a purely archaeological judgement is not sufficient to
establish what may have happened to an ancient archive. Disre-
garding the possibility of later looting, we still have to consider
two factors: (1) there may have been ancient attempts to salvage
archival texts which were of great value to their owners; (2) there
were always limits to the accumulation of archival texts over longer
periods of time. The chronological depth of archives is frequently
limited to a few generations, which means that many records, hav-
ing lost their evidentiary or informative value, could be discarded
or, especially in an institutional context, stored separately as 'dead
archives'. It is difficult to know whether and to what extent this
happened, since such processes are hardly ever described in texts,
but occasionally a combination of archaeological and philological
observations yields clues.

That valuable records were salvaged is clear from the discov-
eries made in Ur-Utu's residence in the Old Babylonian city of
Sippar-Ammānum (Tell ed-Dēr), where a string of lost tablets re-
veals the partly (?) successful attempt to save valuable records such
as title deeds (cf. Janssen 1996: 238 ff.; see also van Lerberghe in
this volume). In Zimrilim's palace at Mari dated labels revealed
that Hammurabi's clerks had selected documents from the inter-
national archives, apparently in order to take them to Babylon (cf.

Charpin 1995). Such clear evidence is missing for the houses of *kārum* Kanish, but the fact remains that the archives must have comprised valuable records, especially debt-notes of claims of substantial amounts of silver, which no creditor would have willingly left behind. The archaeological evidence of the destruction and abandonment of *kārum* Kanish might help us to determine whether salvage of some records did take place in antiquity. The excavation reports show that the destruction was not uniform, some houses were utterly burnt, others not, and the amount of damage also varies. Moreover, no unburied human skeletons were found in the *kārum* to suggest a sudden catastrophe, and in the houses[51] almost no valuable objects were found—only household goods, especially pottery, and tablets. The inhabitants apparently had time to escape unharmed with their most valuable possessions. Why not also their valid and collectable debt-notes, usually stored in separate containers and hence quickly identifiable?

4.2. *The time range of the archives*

This possibility receives some support from a consideration of the dates of the texts, the dated texts being primarily the debt-notes in question. Texts are dated by the names of year-eponyms, whose sequence and dates, in the absence of an eponym list, have long been a matter of controversy, although it was possible to identify a 'best-attested main phase' of the trade of *c*.35–40 years. The discovery of an Assyrian eponym chronicle at Mari (Birot 1985) fixed the sequence of about a dozen late year-eponyms and offered clues for more absolute dates (at least within the framework of the middle chronology). In 1998 I had the good fortune to discover in Ankara two copies of the Old Assyrian eponym list, which yield a fixed sequence of 129 eponymic years, starting (henceforth eponym 1 = year 1) with the beginning of the reign of Irišum I (*c*.1970 BC). This list, which is correlated with the reigns of five Old Assyrians rulers, allows a much better chronological evaluation, which is important also for assessing the archives.[52]

The period of Assyrian commercial presence in Anatolia can now be linked to the reigns of the following rulers of Assur (dates are those of the middle chronology):

[51] The tombs, many of which were later looted, are a different issue.
[52] See for this eponym list and its chronologicla implications Veenhof (in press).

Irišum I	40 years	*c*.1975–1935	*c*.1945, beginning of *kārum* Level II
Ikunum	14 years	*c*.1934–1921	
Šarrukin	40 years	*c*.1920–1881	
Puzur-Assur II	8 years	*c*.1880–1873	
Naram-Sin	27+*x* years	*c*.1872–?	*c*.1835, end of *kārum* Level II
Irišum II	*x* years	*c*.?–1809	
Šamši-Adad I	33 years	*c*.1808–1776	*c*.1800, beginning of *kārum* Level Ib

Thanks to the list, we now also know all the names and, but for four or five, the sequence of the last fifteen year-eponyms before the end of *kārum* Level II, which falls about ten years after the end of the eponym list, *c*.35–40 years after the accession of Naram-Sin. This allows us to observe that the number of contracts dated to these late years, and especially the last years, is very small (in nearly all cases fewer than five, and in some years none at all). This is strange, because the sudden destruction of a flourishing colony with its archives should have yielded large numbers of collectable debt-notes dated to these last years, the more so since most specified terms not exceeding one year. Two interpretations suggest themselves. Either (1) there was a fairly long, gradual decline of the trade, which resulted in fewer transactions by fewer Assyrian traders, perhaps in a *kārum* with more empty houses; or (2) there was sufficient warning of the catastrophe to allow most traders to take their collectable debt-notes with them when they fled the *kārum*.

It is impossible to solve this question for lack of good evidence; if (2) were true, the scenario of (1) would be an illusion, created by the deliberate removal of archival texts. My impression, based not on the number but on the contents of the texts dated to the later year-eponyms (especially those of the archive of Kalia, excavated in 1992), is not one of decline and stagnation. On the other hand, it is a fact that most important traders, known from large archives, died years before the end of the colony of Level II. Elamma, whose archive I am currently studying, was active for a period of roughly forty years, and he does not occur after year 105. His wife, who survived him by a few years, and sons continued the business, but there are no dated records after year 115. The question of what happened during the next twenty-five years or so before the destruction of the *kārum*, and of why Elamma's archive was left

in place, cannot be answered until we have more archives covering these last years.

The eponym lists allows a second conclusion. Apart from one single, atypical text dated to year 47 (reign of Ikunum), dated texts start only with the fifth year of Ikunum's successor Šarrukin (c.20 years after the death of Irishum I), and the number of texts dated to the next 10–15 years is very small, several of them, moreover, occurring in memorandums which list old debts, which tend to survive longer.[53] The 'best-attested main phase' of the trade is the one roughly between years 75 and 115. On the other hand, it is perfectly clear that Assyrians already traded with Anatolia and lived there, at least in *kārum* Kanish (probably the first, oldest, and hence most important, colony), during the reign of the Assyrian rulers Ikunum and his father Irišum I. There are references to letters written by Ikunum,[54] and in 1983 the excavations turned up a broken envelope with an impression of the seal of Irišum I (Özkan 1993: kt 83/k 246), which implies that he sent letters to *kārum* Kanish. The conclusion must be that nearly all records dated to the first 30–40 years have disappeared, presumably because they were outdated and had become useless after one or two generations, while the gradual accumulation of archival texts may also have stimulated selection and removal.

But this may not be the whole explanation. It seems a priori likely that the trade saw a gradual expansion in geographical range and volume, from the first and oldest colony in *kārum* Kanish to other regions of Anatolia. This must have resulted in more settlements, firms, archives, and records, and also have affected the trading procedures. A wider range and denser network must have stimulated credit transactions with a larger number of Assyrian agents and Anatolian palaces and customers. Since it was precisely this type of credit sale in combination with commercial borrowing which produced dated contracts, dated records must have been much less numerous in the early years, which makes the absence of old records in the archives less surprising. A smaller trading community with simpler procedures, moreover, may have meant that there were

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[53] Several early eponyms occur in a memorandum of Elamma (kt 92/k 114), which lists eight debt claims dated between years 66 and 94.

[54] See Larsen (1976), 131 ff.; the new eponym list shows that Ikunum reigned for fourteen years.

fewer risks, fewer uncollected debts, and hence fewer surviving debt-notes.

While the removal of superfluous or invalid records must have been a fairly common feature, we have little evidence for it, and no archaeological proof in the form of lots of discarded tablets found in dumps or in secondary use. Rather, few debts and loans were for periods longer than one year, which meant that most debt-notes could have been discarded quite soon after their creation. In fact, after payment they had to be returned to the debtors in order to 'die' or to 'be killed' by them.[55] Even long-term joint investments (*naruqqu* capital) and loans (called *ebuṭṭu*, sometimes *būlātum*) never lasted longer than at most 10–12 years. Most trade records, unlike title deeds recording the purchase of real estate or slaves, by nature record liabilities of limited duration and could be discarded after a couple of years. In particular, after the periodic settlement of accounts, organized by the *kārum*, many records would have become superfluous or invalid. If necessary, new ones could be drawn up: debt-notes for remaining or rescheduled debts, for capitalized interest, and for liabilities resulting from balancing debts and claims. But how systematically old records were discarded, and archives 'cleansed' is not known. It may also have depended on the habits of individual traders, on the availability of storage room, and on the services of a scribe who could read and sort out the tablets.

4.3. *Absence and removal of records*

An archive may lack records not only through salvage before or immediately after its destruction, or through the discarding of outdated ones. We must also consider two other features attested in our sources: the more or less systematic absence of particular types of records and the deliberate removal of texts for specific reasons.

Several texts indeed refer to or imply the shipment of archival records to Assur, at times in considerable quantities, which might happen for different reasons:

(1) A trader might return to Assur, usually at a rather advanced age, although this did not mean the end of his involvement in the trade. We know from letters that several traders did return and left

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[55] See for this feature Veenhof (1987), 46 ff.; Michel (1995), 19 ff. TCL 3. 275 is the verdict of a *kārum*, which orders that three debt-notes 'shall die'.

the business in Kanish in the hands of a son or partner.[56] What this involved is not very clear, but we can assume that some took part of their archives along, e.g. records documenting their private investments and property, and perhaps contracts and correspondence dealing with family matters. A record published as EL 141 mentions 'the boxes[57] with Enlilbani's tablets, [and] the boxes with the copies we have entrusted to Idikubum . . . and he will bring them to Enlilbani'. Larsen (1967: 15–16) convincingly connects this operation with Enlilbani's return, after having spent at least sixteen years in Kanish, to Assur, where he needed certain archival texts, apparently both originals and copies.

(2) A lawsuit in Assur before the city assembly, in consequence of an appeal or by decision of the *kārum*, required that a variety of records with evidentiary value and reporting on proceedings before the *kārum* court be shipped there to be available in court. It seems unlikely that all these records were ultimately returned to Kanish.

(3) When an active trader died, his relatives, investors, and creditors would immediately try to get access to his assets and records in order to realize their claims and/or to keep his business going and his money working.[58] Since such situations were not rare, the city had apparently ruled that 'no one was entitled to take/touch anything, that everything had to come together in Assur, and that anyone who took something would be considered a thief' (cf. Veenhof 1995b: 1725–6). Such general settlements of accounts or liquidations in Assur (where a trader's investors would reside) necessarily implied the transfer of archival texts, since claims and counterclaims required proof, frequently in the form of witnessed records. The transfer overland (*šubalkutum*) to Assur of 'encased tablets' and/or their copies, mentioned in several records (see Section 2.3.), may at times have been required by such circumstances.

The archive of Elamma, who does not seem to have returned to Assur, also suffered losses after his death. The letter CCT 5. 3a, written by seven traders in Kanish to 'Elamma's investors and his representatives' (in Assur), informs us about the latter's request to

open Elamma's strongroom in order to collect all remaining silver and copper and to send it to Assur (ll. 9–13). The writers, however, report that even before Elamma's sons had returned to Kanish, the sons of Hinnaja (a close associate of Elamma)[59] had already opened the strongroom, accompanied by a committee of five 'outsiders', and had taken away a debt-note for 21 pounds of silver, declaring that they acted 'under the responsibility of E.'s investors'. The writers ask whether they have to open the room again, after it had been resealed by the first group.

The composition of an archive and the measure in which it reflects a trader's business are also effected by the absence or rarity of particular types of texts. Since family firms active in Anatolia had their basis in Assur, part of the written documentation naturally had to be (also?) available in archives there. There was a lively correspondence between Anatolia and Assur, and thousands of letters found their way into archives in Assur, while only a limited number of archival copies were kept in Kanish. More serious was the fact that the administration of the so-called '*naruqqu* societies'[60] was and remained an Assur affair. An official verdict of the city even stipulates: 'If anyone has given A. in Anatolia a *naruqqu* capital or a [long-term] *ebuṭṭu* loan, it shall be collected [by him], together with the man's other investors in the city . . . No one shall touch the silver, it shall be brought together in the city' (cf. Veenhof 1995b: 1725–6). This meant that the important contracts whereby *naruqqu* societies were founded, together with the records supplied to the individual shareholders, remained in Assur. Very few such contracts have turned up in the archives of Kanish and the one found in Elamma's archive must be a copy, without the names of the witnesses. Records of payment of dividends (*šipkātum*) and division of profit, and those necessary for the final settlement after many years, must have remained in or returned to Assur, as is clear from KTS 2. 45. 10–11 and 40–4: 'will gather [*paḫḫurum*] my *naruqqum* and go to the city . . . I will go to the city and give you whatever is available together with my [other] investors.' The long duration of

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[56] See above, sect. 2.1, for letters sent from Assur to Kanish by ex-archive-holders.

[57] In Assyrian *tamalakkum*, presumably a kind of wooden box, frequently mentioned in connection with the storage or shipment of tablets.

[58] A good example is the opening of the dead Puzur-Assur's strongroom in order to retrieve his assets and records, and to send the silver to Assur for making purchases; see Matouš (1969), especially the statements made in text C.

[59] For a debt claim of Hinnaja against Elamma, which he tries to collect after the latter's death, see the text AO 11216, published in Garelli (1966), 126 ff.

[60] *Naruqqum*, a leather bag, became the technical name for a substantial amount of trading capital (we have examples of 15 kg. of gold) brought together by a number of investors in a joint-stock company and entrusted to a manager for trading in Anatolia; see Larsen (1977b) and Larsen (1999).

a *naruqqu* society[61] and the number of investors must have generated a lot of records, which hence were not, or no longer, available in the archives in Kanish.

5. Problematic Archival Texts

5.1. *Debt-notes*

Every archive contains categories of texts whose presence raises problems, two of which I single out here. The first are debt-notes, present in every archive as evidence of debt claims of the archive-holder. The basic question is whether their presence means that these debts were never paid, the rule being that such records were returned to the debtor upon payment, because they were 'his tablets', bearing the impression of his seal, and he was the only one entitled to destroy or cancel them. If so, do we have to conclude from their presence in a creditor's archive that the debts they record were never paid? Many debt-notes were found by the local diggers before 1948, and they also turn up in the officially excavated archives. The archive excavated in 1970 (partially published in AKT 3)[62] contains, as far as I know, eight debt-notes in which the archive-holder or his sons figure as creditors, plus two where the creditor is anonymous (*tamkārum*), although probably the same people. Six concern debts of Assyrians, four of Anatolians. Since they cover a period of twenty years, this would mean one unpaid debt every two years, which is not a bad record. In Šumiabia's archive, excavated in 1990 and published in TPK, there are twelve debt-notes (including a few whose creditor is an anonymous *tamkārum*) where he, his father, or his brother figure as creditors. They cover a period of seventeen years, again not a bad score. The same is true of Elamma's archive, with a good dozen debt-notes in which he figures as creditor, most of which, moreover, concern (at least by Old Assyrian standards) modest amounts of silver; the biggest is an interest-free loan of 90 shekels of silver to an employee. The picture may be even more favourable, since only four of the debt-notes of the 1970 archive, five of the 1990 archive, and seven

of the Elamma archive are still in sealed envelopes. One may argue that debt-notes in the form of tablets only, without sealed cases, have no legal, evidentiary value.[63] We could assume that occasionally, after payment of a debt, the debt-note was not returned to the debtor, but only its envelope destroyed. The remaining tablet by itself had no legal force, but might be useful for the administration of the creditor if he was accountable to others, e.g. because he had a business partner or managed a long-lasting *naruqqu* society. Proof is not easy to find, and would require a demonstration that the lack of a sealed envelope is not accidental (broken when the archive was destroyed). The possibility of proving this depends on the completeness of the archaeological record, hence the importance of the publication and study of fragmentary envelopes (see above, Section 2.4).

The insistence in many letters on the release, after payment, of the original debt-note[64] suggests that we must take the presence of encased debt-notes in an archive seriously. In kt 86/k 191 the son of a debtor is ready to pay his father's share in a common debt as soon as the relevant contract is brought and shown to him. We also know that if the debtor paid and his debt-note could not be returned (for example, if he paid to someone acting for the creditor or the creditor's archive was situated elsewhere), he was issued a sealed quittance ('tablet of satisfaction', *ṭuppum ša šabā'ē*), which in due time he could exchange for his debt-note, whereupon both tablets would 'die'.[65] Such quittances usually also take pains to state that if the debt-note in question turns up later, it is 'invalid' (*sar* 'false'). This stipulation and the presence in most archives of small numbers of such quittances, which presumably were never exchanged for the original debt-notes, suggest that occasionally debt-notes did disappear and were not returned or reclaimed.[66]

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[61] Those we know made the capital available for periods of 9–12 years; a special clause made early withdrawal of capital by shareholders very disadvantageous.

[62] Thanks to the kindness of Veysel Donbaz, I have been able to use data contained in *c*.40 still unpublished encased tablets, assigned to him for publication.

[63] TPK 7 reports on a conflict about what is called *piṭrāt ṭuppim* (ll. 4–5; perhaps also in TPK 122. 29), in my opinion the broken envelope (the verb *paṭārum* is used for opening sealed packets, etc.), rather than a broken tablet. An appeal to the *kārum* has as its object that '*kārum* D. puts our tablet anew [*eššanimma*] in a sealed case' (lit. 'seals it anew').

[64] The verbs used are *waššurum* and *šēṣu'um*, with respectively the creditor and debtor as subject.

[65] CCT 4. 16a. 22–3; see also n. 55 above. Physical destruction of cancelled tablets is suggested by *Prague* 446, which deals with a debt-note for a large amount of silver. If the son of the debtor produces a sealed quittance, the son of the creditor will give back the debt-note, whereupon 'the one tablet will smash [*mahāṣum*] the other'.

[66] In general a debtor will have disliked a situation where valid evidence of his debt

This need not be dangerous for the ex-debtor, because he could always prove his payment by showing the sealed quittance. Some records of lawsuits dealing with the situation of a dead trader's finances provide examples of archives containing debt-notes whose debtors nevertheless affirm or are ready to provide evidence that the debts have been paid, but we are not told how this could happen. Complications could easily arise when a debt was not due to a named creditor but to an anonymous *tamkārum*, who might cede or even sell his claim, in particular when the debt-note contained the stipulation 'the bearer/holder of this tablet is the creditor' (*wābil/ muka'il ṭuppim šut tamkārum*).[67]

Where we have a debt-note in which the archive-owner figures as debtor, he must have received it back upon payment without destroying it. The deposition kt a/k 440 (unpubl.) records how a man paid two debts to agents of his creditor, whereupon he handed over the quittances he received to A, with the words:

I hereby give you the two encased tablets bearing their [= the agents'] seals. Let them give you in Kanish the tablets of my debts, whereupon you must yield [to them] the tablets with their seals [the quittances]. And my tablets [the original debt-notes] which you obtain, you and B must get access to my tablets and deposit them with my encased tablets and B must put them under seal.

Was this because the debtor wished to destroy them personally (after inspection) or to preserve them for his administration?

There are no simple answers to these questions, but there are enough reasons for not automatically considering all encased debt-notes in an archive to be proof of unpaid debts. In this connection the data of the large memorandums drawn up by excerpting debt-

remained intact after he had paid. In TCL 3. 264. 12–18 a creditor who has been paid, but is unable to give back the debt-note because it is already 'dead' (destroyed), nevertheless has to declare before witnesses (and this is why this record exists) that 'any tablet which turns up in my house of a debt of A. which bears interest is false'. In kt 91/k 167 S. asks his co-debtor A., who had paid their creditor, where the debt-note is, since A. had paid the creditor with the yield of textiles belonging to S. A. answers: 'We did indeed pay the silver to H. and he obtained our debt-note, but I took it and left it to PN.'

[67] I have dealt with this interesting feature (the oldest example of a 'bearer cheque') in Veenhof (1997a), 351 ff. In EL 245 sons and heirs who discover a record of a debt owed to *tamkārum* in their father's archive ask the sons of the (dead) debtor to establish whether their father had indeed sent the silver owed (apparently without getting his debt-note back), or whether the record in question had only been (temporarily) deposited in their father's archive.

notes, with long lists of debts sometimes covering several years, are important.[68] There seems to be no good match between the debts listed in them and those represented by valid debt-notes: in Elamma's archive there is just one such coincidence. This suggests that most of the debts listed were eventually paid. We should also not forget that some debt-notes record loans without a term of payment, where the creditor, probably a moneylender and banker rather than an active trader, may have been lax in enforcing payment as long as he received the substantial annual interest of 30 per cent. But of course bad debtors existed, as is also clear from letters mentioning defaulting debtors to be charged interest, where the word for 'interest' is occasionally in the plural and may refer to compound interest or interest on several different debts. We are surprised to read in letters about people who have not paid back in ten or even twenty years, but in any case this implies that their debt-notes remained in the archive of their creditor for many years.

5.2. *Strange records*

The second problem is the presence in excavated archives of groups of letters, debt-notes, other contracts, and depositions whose recipients, creditors, or parties cannot be identified with the archive-holder or members of his family. The sources suggest various explanations for their presence in the archive.

The first is that people did deposit (groups of) records in the archival room of some one else's home. Such records are said to have been left behind, or given in deposit, lit. 'in order to stay (temporarily)'.[69] The best example is in CTMMA no. 84, the record of a judicial interrogation in a case where one trader had entered his colleague's quarters in the city of Durhumid and removed two boxes full of tablets. Of these, the plaintiff specifies 24 missing tablets (most of which belong to himself and to a few named persons), but he adds in lines 40–1: 'and tablets of outsiders/strangers which they had left in deposit with me'. Such deposits of tablets were probably made when persons were expecting to be absent for a longer period

[68] See for these texts Veenhof (1985), esp. 12, where it is shown that they were not purely administrative listings, but were meant to be used. Some were incorporated in letters, which asked the addressees to 'make all these people pay', others were sent to agents and partners of the creditor, apparently because they could be used to dun the defaulting debtors.

[69] *Ana nabšêm*, from the verb *bašûm* 'to be present'; see *CAD* N/1. 30–1, 2, and for the use of the fientic 'let it remain with you', *CAD* B: 157–8, 4a.

(e.g. a caravan journey to or stay in Assur) and were concerned about their security, but we have very few records concerning such deposits. Nearly all of the thirty contracts edited in EL under the heading *Verwahrung* refer to goods entrusted for caravan transport. Only EL 121 deals with a 'valid deed', a contract concluded between two persons, entrusted to a third. According to kt d/k 2. 9–11 (unpubl.), a trader wrote to the woman A: 'When I was about to leave on a journey, we entrusted many tablets to B . . . You and I, we brought them into the storeroom [*huršum*] and we sealed them.' The word 'strangers', used in CTMMA no. 84, is rather vague, but when it is used of persons appointed in committees authorized to open archives (see Section 3.1), it means impartial outsiders, apparently people who had no business relations with the owner of their archive. If it has this meaning here, we shall certainly have difficulties in finding out who these people are and why their records are found in a particular archive. This agrees with my own experience in trying to discover possible links between Elamma and his family and the owners of 'strange' tablets found in his archive as excavated in 1991.

A second explanation is that valid debt-notes could be handed over or deposited as security by their creditor, as described in Veenhof (2001), 133, 146. An example is found in AKT 3. 104, where the tablet pledged was in 'a big tablet box' deposited by the creditor in the house of a lady.[70] Valid debt-notes, a kind of 'clay money', especially those written out to an (anonymous) creditor (*tamkārum*) and stating that 'the bearer of the tablet is the creditor' (see above, n. 67), could be handed over as pledges, ceded, or perhaps even sold when the creditor was in need of cash. In all such cases they would end up in 'strange' archives, and we can only hope that such an archive also contains information on the business relation between the persons involved, so as to explain their presence.

A third explanation starts from the observation that *kārum* Kanish was not a normal town, where every citizen would have a family and a house to live in. The commercial colony was something special, originally mostly populated by male traders, later also by families. The house of the main trader was inhabited by him, his sons, and other members of the family if they came to Kanish, and hence may have contained not only his own archives, but also records and letters of his sons (if they had some private business) and other relatives. The archive of Elamma clearly reflects this situation through the presence of letters exchanged between female members of the family in Assur and Kanish, and of documents dealing with the marriage, death, burial, and inheritance of other male and female members. But the nature of *kārum* Kanish implies that the house of the boss is also the natural place where personnel of the firm would deposit their small private archives. This is clear from the archive of Imdilum, partly excavated in 1925 by B. Hrozný. It also contained a number of documents (letters, records, debt-notes) of a certain Uṣur-ša-Assur, whose service contract with Imdilum shows him to have been an employee of the firm who travelled for Imdilum and was involved in several transactions.[71] Even the presence of a number of records of Uṣur-ša-Assur's brother Idi-Ištar may be explained in this way, if we assume that his brother took care of his records and stored them, together with his own little archive, in a special spot or container in Imdilum's house.

The discovery of records of a stranger in an archival room may thus point to a business relationship with the owner of the house, the fact that the stranger had no house of his own, or a deposit *ana nabšêm* for various reasons, but for us the choice is difficult. I suspect the first explanation for a group of records of a certain Enna-Suen (letters written to and by him, debt-notes, depositions, etc.), found among the texts of Elamma's archive. A different case is perhaps a group of texts belonging to a certain Assurmutappil, because it comprises no fewer than twenty-five letters, but not a single encased debt-note. It was found together with the archive of Šumiabia in what seems to have been the latter's house, excavated in 1990. The archive was published by Garelli and Michel in TPK, where they wrote:

L'hypothèse d'un dépôt d'archives d'Aššur-muttabbil chez Šumi-abiya lors de son départ de Kanish est tout à fait possible et expliquerait, dans le cas où il ne serait jamais revenu, la présence de ces enveloppes intactes [*containing letters*]. Il est également envisageable d'imaginer un lien familial cognatique entre ces deux merchands expliquant la présence d'une partie de leurs archives dans une même maison. (TPK p. 34)

The problem is how to prove this from the archival texts preserved,

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[70] See for the lady n. 45 above, and for the text and the feature of the 'bearer cheque' Veenhof (1997a), 351–64.

[71] See for his relations with Imdilum CCT 3. 24; EL 103; ICK 1. 155. 15–16; 191. 6; ICK 2. 130. 47; 132. 4 ff.; and for his own business ICK 1. 110; 151; 193; ICK 2. 48; 57 (?).

since the relation between Assurmutappil and Šumiabia is not very
clear.[72] Were the letters, six of which are still in their envelopes and
in none of which Assurmutappil is the only addressee, duplicates
whose contents were already known, or had they arrived after his
departure?

The presence of 'strange' records (especially 'contracts en dépo-
sitions') in a trader's archive is explained by Michel (1995: 17–19)
by assuming that traders who had witnessed transactions recorded
in writing occasionally received a copy of the record, which would
allow them to remember what they had testified.[73] I agree with this
conclusion, but stress the 'occasionally', because I do not believe
that witnesses received copies of all the debt-notes and other stan-
dard contracts they had sealed as witnesses.[74] The clearest cases
are depositions in court, when a witness had actually been called
to testify 'before the dagger of Assur', and his personal involve-
ment, especially in important cases or affairs relating to relatives or
business associates, may have entitled him to obtain a copy of the
record.[75] A convincing case is the record of a deposition dealing with
a conflict between the Assyrians and a local ruler. One copy of the
deposition[76] was found in the archive of Assurtaklaku, who played
a key role in the conflict, and a second one (with some interesting
variants), published by Günbattı in Van Soldt (2001), 151–60, in
the archive (excavated in 1960) of Uşur-ša-Ištar, who was one of

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[72] See TPK p. 27; but the interpretation of letter 35 does not convince me (ll. 14 ff.
belong to the quotation of what Belanum said).

[73] The issue of a person's memory is important. While we may assume that a
person could remember a marriage or the sale of land he had witnessed years ago (but
probably not the exact amount of the dowry or the price of the land), it seems utterly
impossible that Old Assyrians could remember all the complicated commercial and
financial transactions (including amounts, rates of interest, dates, etc.) they had
witnessed. That means that the written record acquired added importance as a
source of knowledge, a source also needed by a witness who was summoned to
testify under oath.

[74] We know very little about the choice of witnesses, which was probably condi-
tioned by practical considerations and by the interests of the person who took the
initiative, e.g. as plaintiff. Those 'seizing' their opponents or witnesses against their
opponent in private summonses are invariably said to be the ones who 'set witnesses
against them' (šībī šakānum ana), hence people on whose support they could rely
rather than complete strangers.

[75] Note in the letter kt n/k 451 (communicated by C. Günbattı): 'When you hear
this letter, bring your witnesses to the *kārum* and take their tablets [containing their
sworn depositions] and send me a copy.'

[76] Belonging to the archive discovered in 1993 and published in Michel and Garelli
(1996).

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the witnesses whose testimony the deposition contained. The same
explanation applies to the deposition kt 92/k 97, which belongs to
the lot of texts of Enna-Suen found in Elamma's archival room.
It records a deposition on the basis of his testimony only, because
the other factual witness, as the text mentions, was absent, which
made him alone fully responsible for the testimony rendered. A
more systematic search will certainly yield more such examples.

Archives of Old Assyrian traders, especially those officially exca-
vated since 1948, have a lot to contribute to archival studies, since
they are rich and varied, and because the records themselves offer
a lot of information on their production, value, use, and storage.
In order to exploit these possibilities, good co-operation between
archaeologists and philologists is necessary, with good access to
all archaeological data on findspots and storage of the tablets, full
publication of all texts, including those still in envelopes, and illus-
trations of complete and broken envelopes, seal impressions, and
bullae. Epigraphists must also co-operate and exchange data, be-
cause in the Old Assyrian commercial community essential data on
an archive-owner, his family and business relations, legal conflicts,
and occurrences dated by year- and week-eponym are available in
other archives too. So far I have found some forty references to
Elamma, among which are some very important ones, in texts out-
side his own archive. A full prosopography, and complete lists of
eponyms, writers and addressees of letters, debtors and creditors,
and parties in contracts and legal conflicts, will be essential if we
are to find answers across the boundaries of individual archives, in
the interest of everyone working on this fascinating material.

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6

Documents in Government under the Middle Assyrian Kingdom

J. N. POSTGATE

1. Introduction

In about 1450 BC the whole of north Mesopotamia, by which I mean the lowland parts of northern Iraq and of north-east Syria and Turkey as far west as the Euphrates, was under the political domination of the Mitanni kingdom with its centre in the Habur basin. We have virtually no archives which date to this time, but there are two major bodies of cuneiform texts which come from this region somewhat later in the second millennium (fourteenth–thirteenth century BC). These are the Nuzi texts, from a small provincial princedom near Kerkuk on the south-east wing of the Mitannian empire, and the texts from Assur, the capital of the newly formed state of Assyria which by 1200 BC had completely supplanted Mitanni and absorbed the entire north Mesopotamian area.

The Middle Assyrian texts from Assur are very varied in character, provenance, and date. The Nuzi archives are much less varied, being principally family legal dossiers, although with some texts from public administration, and cover a much shorter time-span. My own familiarity is with the Assur material, to which can be added miscellaneous archives from provincial centres, including Tell Billa, Tell al-Rimah, Sheikh Hamad, and several others.[1]

Note. For bibliography see p. 137.

[1] On the basis of this material I devoted quite a long article to Middle Assyrian documentary format and associated issues, which covers most of the issues under consideration here in relation to the texts published at that time (Postgate 1986*b*). A brief account of the different archives at Assur itself was given in Postgate (1986*a*), and the details in this were comprehensively overhauled by Pedersén (1985), with

2. The Written Documents: Physical Characteristics

Most documents were written in cuneiform script on clay tablets, which varied in size in response to the amount of information to be recorded. Some tablets were impressed, while still damp, by rolling cylinder seals over the surface. In legal transactions these were the seal of the party ceding a right or acknowledging liability, placed at the head of the obverse above the text proper, plus the seals of some or all of the witnesses, rolled wherever else space could be found, often but not always on uninscribed parts of the edges. The individual impressions are usually identified by an accompanying written note ('seal of PN'). By contrast, sealed administrative texts usually bear only the seal of the person accepting liability, and they are not usually witnessed.

Some tablets are enclosed in clay envelopes (Postgate 1986*b*: 13–16). Sometimes these are letters,[2] but rather surprisingly—by comparison with other Mesopotamian documentary traditions—the remainder seem to be administrative receipts (texts attesting the receipt of some commodity).[3]

In Assyria certain administrative records were kept on wooden writing-boards, probably in most cases a hinged diptych, on the waxed inner surfaces of which cuneiform could be written. Their function is described below in greater detail (see pp. 133–6). As far as I am aware, their use is not attested in the Nuzi texts, but they

data taken from the unpublished excavation archives and photographs. Thus the basic outlines of the Oxford workshop theme had already been laid down for the Middle Assyrian system. The following general discussion of the role of documents in government administration at this time can be correspondingly brief, but takes account of new texts published in the last ten years, encouraging the treatment of certain points in greater detail. For these texts see Freydank (1994); Kühne (1995); Cancik-Kirschbaum (1996) has only letters, but some details of unpublished texts from Sheikh Hamad, Tell Chuera, and Tell Sabi Abyad are known to me from the '2. Internationaler Workshop zur Mittelassyrischen Zeit', organized by Prof. Dr Hartmut Kühne, Dr Helmut Freydank, and Dr Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum in Berlin in Apr. 1997. The text of the present article is virtually unchanged from the workshop contribution; for two other contributions relevant to this theme, each written and published since the Oxford workshop, see Postgate (2001), esp. 191–3, and Postgate (2002).

[2] See below, sect. 3, under *našpertu*.
[3] The detailed terminology and function of such envelopes is discussed below, pp. 131–3.

are known at this time at Emar (on the Euphrates near Aleppo) and in Anatolia (cf. Symington 1991: 118).

3. The Written Documents: Assyrian Terminology

Since the correlation of certain types of transaction or record with certain formats of document is plainly deliberate, one would not be surprised to find that the Assyrian scribes had their own terminology for different document types. Terms used for describing documents in the Middle Assyrian texts are:

ṭuppu 'tablet': general term for clay tablet of any kind.

ṭuppu dannutu 'strong tablet': technical term for a legal conveyance document (e.g. land or slave sale).

ṭuppu ṣabittu 'executed tablet': probably refers to a tablet which has been formally sealed and witnessed and which provides evidence for an administrative (or legal) transaction.[4]

kanīku 'sealed (tablet)': the only two Middle Assyrian examples seem to refer to tablets which are lists which have been sealed to give them authoritativeness and a guarantee on the part of the person(s) sealing. However, this is too small a sample to establish so precise a meaning, and the word is used in other dialects and probably had a wider range of meanings.

kiṣirtu (original meaning uncertain): this problematic term was discussed by me (Postgate 1986b: 21–2), and was taken to refer to an envelope, both in the Middle Assyrian texts and in Neo-Assyrian times. It has recently been discussed again by Radner (1997: 63–5), who suggests a Neo-Assyrian meaning of *Hüllentafel* (i.e. a tablet and its envelope), with which I would not quarrel. The precise meaning 'tablet-in-envelope' rather than just 'envelope' could also

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[4] This interpretation of *ṣabātu* is still controversial. The issue, discussed at length in Postgate (1986b), 18–21, is admittedly complex, and the precise meaning of the phrase remains elusive, but that this interpretation is broadly correct for Middle Assyrian seems fairly certain to me. Whether the same applies to Middle Babylonian usage (cf. Postgate 1986b: 20–1) is less easy to determine. For the Neo-Assyrian period a comprehensive presentation of the evidence is given in Radner (1997), 89–106; she reaches a different conclusion. Further discussion of the Neo-Assyrian position is therefore needed, and should take account of *dannutu ṣabātu* in Fales and Jakob-Rost (1991), no. 38, where the editors translate 'seize' but I believe a radically different interpretation of the text is required.

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be correct in Middle Assyrian contexts, but the implications of this need renewed discussion in the light of fresh evidence from Tell Chuera (see below, pp. 131–3).

lē'u 'board': for the writing-boards see below, pp. 134–6.

našpertu 'missive': this term, sometimes preceded by *ṭuppi* ('missive tablet'), certainly refers to an administrative order conveyed by letter, in accordance with which an official is expected to act. In Postgate (1986b), 26, I surmised that 'some of these message-tablets were sealed', and suggested that VS 19: no. 39 might be one such tablet. Although it has no surviving envelope, it is sealed on both faces and dated, and is addressed to the governor of Amasaki by the chancellor, Babu-aha-iddina. New texts from Tell Chuera fit the same pattern exactly, being sealed and dated letter-orders addressed to a governor, but they actually retain their envelopes. This term to my mind can now be identified with such administrative letter-orders with some confidence. That it sometimes has an envelope, but is not a *kiṣirtu*, may have implications for the correct interpretation of *kiṣirtu* (see below, pp. 131–3).

4. Storage of Archives

The evidence for archive storage comprises both archaeological finds and references in the texts.[5] To start with the archaeology, the best evidence comes from the temple of the god Assur at the site of Assur, where some 600 tablets were found deriving from the office of the 'regular offerings overseer' (*rab ginā'ē*). The archive room lay on the south-west side of the outer courtyard of the temple, and the tablets had been stored in eight or ten large pottery jars. Three of these pots bore cuneiform inscriptions identifying the contents (Postgate 1986a: 170; Pedersén 1985: archive M 4). One of them identified itself as the 'sealed-tablet container [*bīt kanīkāte*] of the accounts of the brewers of the temple of Aššur'. Another says 'of the victualler and oil-presser of the temple of Aššur', and the third merely 'of Šamaš-aḫa-eriš son of Riš-Marduk'.[6]

Several other Middle Assyrian archives from Assur were found

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[5] An excellent survey for readers of Danish remains Weitemeyer (1955); see now Pedersén (1998) for a comprehensive survey of the later material.

[6] Described and full texts translated in Grayson (1976), 42–1: nos. 26* and 27*; for a photograph see Haller and Andrae (1955), pl. 49.

in, or in association with, a pottery jar. The archive of Mutta comprised 112 tablets stored in a jar, to do with a year's transactions concerning sheep (Postgate 1986*a*: 171–2; Pedersén 1985: archive M 6). The archive of Ubru included 57 or 58 tablets inside a pottery vessel near the western city wall (Postgate 1986*a*: 172–4; Pedersén 1985: archive M 8). Ad-mati-ili's family archive, composed of 54 (or 60) tablets, was found in a pottery jar in a house in the south-west quarter of the city. This pot was stored along with many others in a small storeroom attached to the entry vestibule of the house (Postgate 1986*a*: 180–1; Pedersén 1985: archive M 12).

Tablet jars are also normal further afield. At Tell al-Rimah (some 60 km. west of Nineveh) the main body of Middle Assyrian tablets came from within the old temple, but one group of about 20 private legal documents was found in 1964 in a pottery jar close to the surface of the mound (see Wiseman 1968: 186 ff.; Oates 1965: 75; Postgate 2002). At Tell Chuera at the western corner of the Habur basin, although the majority of cuneiform documents was found in and around a niche in the wall of room 3, where they had plainly been stored, an inscribed vessel was found near the surface in the same context as the fragments of a tablet.[7] At Tell Sheikh Hamad the tablets in building P were found in association with large jar sherds (Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996: 8). It is clear that clay jars were regularly used for both public and private archives. This was of course an ancient practice, since archives in the Old Assyrian colony at Kültepe were regularly kept in (sometimes sealed) jars.[8]

As for the textual references, undoubtedly the most illuminating is a tablet from a thirteenth-century family archive at Assur which lists the contents of one of their storerooms. This begins with parts of a chariot and concludes with miscellaneous things like furniture and other metal and wooden objects. The middle of the list is summarized as '24 chests of tablets'. The term for chest is *quppu*, which may be of wood or reed; included within the list are two or three other container types, which include a 'vat' (*marsattu*). The text gives considerable detail about the types of tablet stored in this archive. They were classified by their subject matter, and in this context it seems worthwhile citing the text to illustrate the variety

of both the documentation this family had seen fit to conserve and the containers in which they stored it.[9]

1 chest [*quppu*] of (obligations) on Šamaš-eriš.
1 chest of clearance(s) of people and fields, of the town of Šarika.
1 chest of (obligations) on Aššur-tahatti.
1 *ditto* of expropriated tablets of (obligations) on citizens of Aššur.
1 *ditto* of (obligations) on Aššur-mušabši . . .
1 *ditto* of (obligations) on Ištar-eriš; 1 chest [of . . .] of the town of Karana.
1 *ditto* of (obligations) on craftsmen; 1 chest of cattle and donkeys owed by citizens of Aššur.
1 *ditto* of (obligations) on Riš-Adad; 1 chest of herald's proclamations for houses in the inner city.
1 *ditto* of sheep owed by citizens of Aššur.
1 *ditto* of grain owed by citizens of Aššur.
1 *ditto* of mixed silver owed by citizens of Aššur.
1 *ditto* of . . . and donkeys owed by shepherds.
1 vat [*marsattu*] of tablets of Riš-Adad.
1 chest of tablets of the palace owed by the horse-trainer.
1 chest of envelopes [*kiṣrāte*] of Riš-Adad.
1 half-vessel [*mišlu*] of . . . of the provinces (?).
1 vat of (obligations) on Uqa-den-ili (?).
1 pot [*tallu*] of Arzuhina workmanship (of) Mannu-gir- . . . and his brothers and Sin-šeya.
1 vat of tablets of [PN], the butler.
1 chest of . . . of clearances (?).
1 chest of . . . of . . . of Ištar-ummi and Šamaš-lu-dayyan.
1 vat (and?) 1 vessel of letters (?).
TOTAL: 24 chests of tablets [*ṭuppāte*].

5. Types of Administrative Document

Middle Assyrian legal documents known to us conform to a banal norm and will not be considered here further. Administrative texts, on the other hand, vary in response to the variety of situations they reflect, and deserve more extensive discussion. Rather than attempt a detailed categorization of the precise function of every administrative document, for which neither time nor space is sufficient, there follow some brief general observations, followed by

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[7] Kühne (1995), 203. Built-in niches for tablet storage are well attested in the 1st millennium BC, e.g. in Sargon's Nabu temple at Khorsabad or the temple library at Sippar.

[8] For the use of jars in Mesopotamia throughout the ages see Weitemeyer (1955), 65–6. See also Veenhof, this volume.

[9] Full edition in Postgate (1988), no. 50, with commentary on pp. 116–19.

two sections dealing with particular types of document which pose problems.

A first fundamental point to be established about any administrative record is whether it is 'unilateral' or 'bilateral'. By this I mean, whether it is a record produced and kept by one person (or institution) for their own purposes, or one which records a transaction or other relationship between two parties and is acknowledged as valid by each side, and retained by one side (or sometimes both) as evidence for the resulting liability. Normally the bilateral nature of a document is implicit in the wording of the text, but by the late second millennium BC the acknowledgement of liability was usually also expressed physically on the document, with a seal impression. In this respect it resembles a private legal transaction.

One characteristic bilateral Middle Assyrian government document is the job contract. This resembles a private commercial debt-note, but without the witnesses required for a legally valid document. The obligation recorded may be simply to supply a commodity, to receive a commodity (as *iškāru*) and having worked with it to return a finished product, or to collect a commodity from a third party and deliver it. A time limit is usually prescribed, and the text states that once the commodity is delivered 'he may break his tablet'. This basic formula is infinitely adaptable, and so is applied to virtually any administrative transaction which involves one official (or privately contracted person) carrying out a prescribed task for another.

Unilateral documents are primarily identifiable by negative criteria, i.e. the absence of any sealing (or envelope), the lack of mention of one or both parties, the absence of any statement of liability (e.g. *ina muḫḫi*), and the absence of any 'verb of transmission' (e.g. *laqā'u*, *tadānu*, *maḫāru*). There is ample evidence from Assur for unilateral administrative lists of expenditures and receipts, usually of foodstuffs and materials for craft production. The Assur archives have less to say about the administration of agriculture, but I believe that we can expect much in this sphere from the provincial centre of Dur-katlimmu (Sheikh Hamad on the lower Habur). All such lists known to me record past events—I am not aware of any 'planning' documents which record estimates or prescribe future payments.

On small memorandums the scribes often wrote 'written down so as not to forget' (*ana lā mašā'e šaṭir*; see Freydank 1994: no. 18). As

far as I know, plain memorandums and unilateral account texts were not sealed.[10] Since they were accounts of past events, there would have been no need to update them, and the thirteenth-century Assur texts are crammed in ruled-off sections on to large clay tablets without much concession to the user by way of layout within each section (see Freydank 1994: nos. 1, 3). However, it is worth noting that the wording of such an account tablet could resemble, and perhaps also form the basis of, a bilateral receipt text (cf. Postgate 1986b: 14–15). The process of 'doing the accounts' (*nikkassē ṣabātu*) was sometimes certainly a bilateral one, even though both parties were within the administration. I am not aware of any document which says that 'the accounts between A and B have been completed and A (or B) now owes nothing'; this would have been superfluous, and it is probable that a sealed document would only be produced if any outstanding liabilities remained (one example is KAJ 80 = Postgate 1988: 40). The Old Assyrian merchants talked of 'uncovering the jars', which evidently meant taking out all the previous period's records and compiling them into a statement of the current mutual obligations.[11] In an efficient administration such procedures take place at regular intervals, and there is some evidence that government offices kept annual accounts.[12] Some texts also suggest that months were used as convenient divisions of time for accounting purposes, such as Freydank (1994), no. 1, which is a bread receipt and expenditure account starting on 1 Kuzallu and dated 30 Kuzallu).[13]

6. *Kiṣirtu*, *kaṣāru*, and Related Problems

In Middle Assyrian texts at least, the meaning of *kiṣirtu* cannot be established without taking into account the associated usage of *kaṣāru*. In an earlier discussion it was concluded that 'whether or

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[10] Readers should be aware that in earlier publications philologists did not always record information about seal impressions, so that statements of this sort are always liable to be invalidated.

[11] The phrase is *qablītam errūm* (from *erūm*, 'naked', misunderstood by both *CAD* and *AHw* in different ways).

[12] Cf. Postgate (1986b), 36–7. A new example for recording by *līmmu* is given by Freydank (1994), no. 30.

[13] Freydank (1994), no. 3, is perhaps similar, recording grain issues and with its final words 'of the month of Ša-sarrāte'.

not *kaṣāru* is to be understood literally as 'to apply the envelope',
it . . . implies some form of authentication or "endorsement" by a
superior official' (Postgate 1986*b*: 22). This is confirmed by a new
phrase which has turned up in the Middle Assyrian documents
from Tell Chuera: *ṭuppi tūbala ana kunukki ša kiṣrāte tutâr. šumma
adi uraḫ ūmāte lā tattabal lā tuttaer lā ikaṣṣurūnikku* (cf. Kühne
1995: 216 ff.). This I would understand as 'you will bring my tablet
and convert it into "seals of case-tablets/envelopes". If after one
month you have not brought it and converted it, they will not
kaṣāru for you.' The background to this is that the recipient of the
letter is being told how to extract from the administration formal
acknowledgement of the expenditure he will have to incur as a result
of the instructions issued to him in the letter. This recognition
evidently has to take the form of one or more sealed *kiṣirtu*, and
the process of creating such a document is called *kaṣāru*. There are
still uncertainties about the technical phraseology, especially the
words *kunukki ša kiṣrāte*, but taken together these new instances
do strengthen the conclusion that the procedure is 'some form of
authentication or "endorsement" by a superior official'.

It remains hard to decide whether *kaṣāru* refers to the physi-
cal act of applying an envelope and associated sealing (and *kiṣirtu*
accordingly to the envelope or tablet-in-envelope), or to 'binding'
in a metaphorical sense (and *kiṣirtu* accordingly to a 'bond'); and
whether the actual letter-tablet we have would be 'converted' into
a *kiṣirtu* by the application of an envelope, or an entirely new docu-
ment is to be created in its stead. Since this difficult issue relates to
the use of envelopes, it does perhaps merit further exploration. The
answer is that it seems more likely that an entirely new document
was created, given that the Tell Chuera phrase (envisaging a *future*
procedure called *kaṣāru* and resulting in a *kiṣirtu*) comes from at
least four letters (perhaps we should call them 'letter-orders' to
use a term introduced for Ur III Sumer), each of which *already*
consists of a sealed tablet enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the
same text as the tablet (see also below, p. 136, on sealed *boards* in a
Hittite context). This suggests that *kiṣirtu* refers not specifically to
an envelope, or to a tablet-in-envelope, but only to a certain type of
document which (sometimes, usually, always?) takes the form of a
tablet-in-envelope.

The physical evidence for tablets-in-envelopes suggests that
these are documents I have termed generally receipts (Postgate

1986*b*: 13–14), in other words, texts which state that certain com-
modities have been 'received' (*maḫir*). However, that is not the only
verb used, and we also find *madid* 'measured out', *tadin* 'given out',
ētaklu and *ultākilu* 'consumed/caused to be consumed'. Thus these
documents state that the commodity has reached its intended des-
tination, and give that statement official confirmation by sealing
the tablet and enclosing it in a sealed envelope. This agrees satis-
factorily with the scenario reflected in the Tell Chuera letters, and
suggests that we could paraphrase *kaṣāru* as 'to certify properly
expended' and *kiṣirtu* as a 'certificate of proper expenditure'.

This is different from a normal receipt document, which usually
confirms receipt of a commodity by an individual, for whatever
purpose, and would be retained by the previous 'owner': here the
confirmation is that the administration has received a satisfactory
account of the ultimate disposition of the commodity, but the two
types of document belong together in that they are both *conclud-
ing* documents, recording the completion of a bilateral relationship,
rather than *initiating* documents, recording the creation of a lia-
bility. In some systems it might have been felt sufficient for the
administration to prepare a unilateral statement and thereby satisfy
itself that its delegate had fulfilled his obligations. That a need was
felt for this elaborate sealing and enveloping mechanism was typical
of the Middle Assyrian ethos, on which more below.

7. Writing-Boards

Plenty of evidence exists for wooden writing-boards in Mesopo-
tamian administration after 1500 BC, and this is summarized for
Middle Assyrian in Postgate (1986*b*), 22–6. The evidence for such
boards in Anatolia, and at Emar and Ugarit, is collected by Syming-
ton (1991). They were probably always a hinged diptych (polyp-
tychs are attested in the first millennium for scholastic texts) with
wax inlaid on the inner surfaces to take the script. There is speci-
fic mention of wax in connection with these boards in texts from
Hattusas, Ugarit, and Assur (and quite likely elsewhere).

What were the reasons for using a wooden board rather than
the more traditional cuneiform tablet? We presume that the ad-
vantages of boards over cuneiform tablets were that they offered a
larger surface and so could accommodate longer texts, and that the

malleability of the wax allowed the addition and removal of entries. We know from the cuneiform texts that boards could be used for long lists of personnel and/or commodities, for transmission from one geographical centre to another, and that they could be sealed.[14] The only contemporary example of a wooden writing-board comes from the Ulu Burun shipwreck. By comparison with wooden and ivory writing-boards of the first millennium it was very small (9.5 × 6.2 cm.), and could not have accommodated some of the lists known to have been kept on boards at Assur in the thirteenth century (see below). It seems possible that it belongs in an east Mediterranean environment, where boards were used for the whole range of purposes fulfilled by clay tablets in cuneiform contexts. Boards must have been more expensive (cf. Payton 1991: 106), and hence one would perhaps not expect to find such small wooden writing-boards in Assyria, where clay was the norm. In the west there is a complication in that boards were probably the normal vehicle for hieroglyphic (as opposed to cuneiform) script, so that the usage of the vehicle for the script reflects a much deeper difference than merely the type of administrative operation involved.

That in Assyria boards had a role in government administration is plain from passages like KAJ 260 (Postgate 1986b: 23), 'they looked in the earlier and later boards of grain received', or KAJ 109, where a large quantity of grain is described as being 'in accordance with thirteen boards which the deportees . . . received' (Postgate 1988: no. 34). This latter instance implies that on these boards the central administration had inscribed lists, evidently specifying the numbers of deportees and their domestic animals, and *perhaps* also the exact amounts of grain due to each, which had then been entrusted to the (officials in charge of) the deportees themselves for subsequent conversion into grain at their destination.

Another instance of the central administration establishing lists of personnel on waxed boards is provided by a particular group of boards referred to in texts from the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (*c.*1244–1208 BC) as 'the board of PN', and also a 'board of the king'. It is clear that these boards listed men in connection with military service, with over 2,000 men on a single board. I concluded earlier that 'these lists of soldiers . . . served more than one purpose: as

[14] For possible ways of sealing a board see Payton (1991), 103–5. Note that a few Neo-Assyrian clay sealings excavated in the Review Palace at Kalhu (Nimrud) are perhaps from boards listing reviewed soldiers (Dalley and Postgate 1984: nos. 21–3).

well as the essential record of persons under each command, they were used to supply the same information for the benefit of those responsible for the issue of rations to them' (Postgate 1986b: 24–5). Since this was written, fresh evidence has come from the provinces that this system was well established, and that it operated between different administrative centres.

The 'board-owners' listed in VS 19: no. 1 are: the king; Lulayu; Sin-ašared; Šamaš-apla-uṣur;[15] and Adad-šamši. Boards of the king and of Šamaš-apla-uṣur and Adad-šamši are also listed in VS 21: no. 17; and of Lulayu, Sin-ašared, Šamaš-apla-uṣur, and Adad-šamši in VS 19: no. 9. Collation of an Assur tablet by Dr Helmut Freydank allows an improved understanding of KAJ 245 (Postgate 1988: no. 45).[16] Here the name Adad-šamši is now to be restored in l. 13 in place of my queried Sasi. This means that the tablet now has a 'board of the king' a 'board of Aššur-si . . .', a 'board of Šamaš-aha-iddina', and a 'board of Aššur-šamši'. Further, a new text from Tell Sheikh Hamad also mentions persons 'of the board of PN', where the PNs are Lulayu, Sin-ašared, Šamaš-aha-iddina, and Adad-šamši.[17] The new occurrences serve to reinforce the conclusion that these boards were used to record the assignation[18] of conscripted troops to one of about five high officials. It is relevant here to note, as Wolfgang Pempe pointed out to me, that the texts mentioning these board-owners cover a span of more than twenty years, and it is thus reasonable to conclude that the boards were in effect standing registers of men integral to the organization of the Middle Assyrian army. They were kept for reference by the administration not only in respect of the identity of the individuals concerned, but also when organizing and recording the distribution of commodities to the army.

Looking beyond Assyria, there are a few mentions of boards in contemporary texts from Babylonia which show that here too they could be used for a standing list or register for consultation (see *CAD*: L 157a). Whether boards were also in use in the admin-

[15] This is how the name, written *d*UTU-A-PAP, was read in Postgate (1986b), but there is now complex evidence suggesting that it could be read as Šamaš-aha-iddina (Freydank 1990: 308, citing other examples given in Pedersén 1985: 107–8 n. 5).

[16] This reading was proposed in Freydank (1990), 308, and kindly confirmed for me by collation by Dr Freydank (letter of 25 May 1997).

[17] DeZ 3374; information courtesy of Wolfgang Pempe (letter of 26 May 1997).

[18] The technical term for such assignation may have been *tabāku* (see Postgate 1988: no. 54. 18).

istrative system of the Mitannian kingdom and its component or successor kingdoms is less certain. They are apparently not referred to in the Nuzi archives (unless in the most recently published material, which I have not searched), but they did have a role within the (post-Mitannian) administrative system at Emar in the thirteenth century (Symington 1991: 118) and at Ugarit (Symington 1991: 121 ff.). Within the Hittite empire there is evidence that officials travelling on state business might be given sealed boards authorizing them to withdraw state commodities from various places: this is different from the attested Assyrian usage, and sounds like the equivalent of the sealed tablets in a sealed envelope (see above) now known from both Tell Chuera and Sabi Abyad (cf. Symington 1991: 120 and n. 6).

8. Public vs. Private

I have more than once suggested that Middle Assyrian administrative practice was borrowed from procedures used by the private commercial sector. This makes it difficult at times to determine whether the liabilities expressed are private and commercial, or public and administrative, or indeed, whether that distinction is universally valid. Various criteria can be used to identify the public and administrative transactions (Postgate 1988: xxiv with n. 24). The consequence of the application of private commercial practices, with the ethos of an audit culture, must have been stultifying to government. Where not only the nature and quantity of commodities as they passed through the administrative machine, but also the administrators' abstract responsibilities in respect of them, are recorded in writing at every stage, rather than relying on the reciprocal expectations of an orally administered hierarchy, flexibility in response to change is lost and bureaucratic paralysis will tend to set in. This is not to deny that other aspects of the commercial tradition, such as company loyalty, may have had compensating advantages, but anyone looking in detail at the documentation required of a Middle Assyrian provincial governor can hardly doubt that he must have experienced some impatience with the 'paperwork'.

A reasonable explanation of the dominance in Assyria of the private transaction as a model for public administration would be

that the commercial enterprises of the city of Assur were already highly sophisticated centuries before the inhabitants of the city found themselves called on to administer the newly acquired territories to the north and west. On the other hand, when we look at neighbouring Nuzi, the situation is very different. Here we do not see the network of administrative liabilities expressed in the same terms as commercial debts, nor are the administrative texts drawn up with the same regularity and formality as in Assyria. Although Nuzi had participated in the network of Old Assyrian trade-routes, it was not a major trading centre itself, and although it borrowed from Babylonian and Assyrian scribal practice, it is entirely possible that its administrative ethos was fundamentally different.

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7

Local Differences in Arrangements of Ration Lists on Minoan Crete

ALEXANDER UCHITEL

Ancient economic archives are usually classified as either private or public. However, the same kinds of document are often found in both types. In my opinion, the most important distinction which should be made in the study of ancient economic documents is between groups of documents (archives) reflecting the market economy on the one hand, and those connected to the non-market economic systems on the other. The latter are often called 'administrative' rather than 'economic' archives. Yet this terminology is misleading, since these archives deal with such purely economic activities as taxation, rationing, work assessment, and the like, clearly distinct from the administration proper reflected in the so-called chancellery documents such as instructions and reports.

All known Mycenaean archives, public and private alike, belong to the second type of economic archive, being composed entirely of records of taxation, conscription, ration lists, and storage inventories almost without any trace of trade activities. The language of the Minoan Linear A archives is still not well enough understood to allow definite classification; however, on general typological grounds it may be assumed with some confidence that they belong to the same category. The present paper tries to isolate among the Minoan Linear A documents one particular class of record typical of this kind of economic archive, namely ration lists.

Minoan Linear A documents belong to two broad categories:

the so-called archival records incised on the surface of clay tablets, roundels, nodules, and seals, and the inscriptions incised or painted upon various objects, mostly stone and clay vessels. Documents of the first class were found in thirteen deposits throughout Crete, on three Cycladic islands (Milos, Kea, Thera), and on Samothrace, in the northern Aegean.

All of these deposits are very small, even by the standards of the Linear B archives. The two largest deposits found at Hagia Triada and Khania contain about 150 and 100 clay tablets respectively. Both were found inside the structures conventionally called 'palaces' which probably served as the administrative centres of two local Minoan states in the Late Minoan I period: Hagia Triada in the Phaistos region in south central Crete, and Khania in the western part of the island. The findspots and quantities of Linear A archival documents are shown in Table 7.1.

TABLE 7.1. *Distribution of Linear A documents*

Findspot	Clay tablets	Nodules	Roundels	Seals
Hagia Triada	147	861	23	2
Khania	93	20	90	
Zakros	31		1	
Phaistos	26	1	11	4
Arkhanes	7			
Mallia	6		2	
Knossos	5		4	1
Petras	2	2		
Pyrgos	2		1	
Tylissos	2			
Thera"	2			
Kea	1		1	
Milos	1			
Palaikastro	1			
Papoura	1			
Gournia			1	
Samothrace		1	1	
TOTAL	327	885	135	7

" Unpubl.; cf. Owen (1997).

The differences between scribal conventions used in Linear A and Linear B scripts in the arrangement of the texts are well known.

The most notable among them are the ruling of the text in horizontal lines introduced by Linear B scribes[1] and different usage of the ideograms. The first of these innovations transformed a line into a coherent unit of the text so that in Linear B a line almost always begins with a group of syllabic signs followed by an ideogram and numerals, while in Linear A the text is written continuously so that any line can end in the middle of a word written phonetically and numerals can be found in any part of a line. The second innovation introduced by Linear B scribes was the repetition of an ideogram in every line before the numerals, while in Linear A an ideogram is found only in the heading, while in the rest of the text numerals directly follow groups of syllabic signs.[2]

The last-mentioned difference between Linear A and Linear B practice does not mean that in the earlier script the use of ideograms was more restricted than in the later one. On the contrary, the whole classification of the Linear B texts into series and subseries introduced by Emmett Bennett is based upon the fact that an ideogram repeated in every line of almost any given Linear B text is usually one and the same ideogram. A combination of several ideograms in one text is relatively rare in this script, and lists of ideograms are attested in only a few cases (Fs, Mc, Uc series at Knossos; Ab, Ma, Un series at Pylos).[3] The majority of Linear A texts, however, are lists of various ideograms, which appear under the headings written phonetically. The ideograms in these lists can represent men, animals, various artefacts, and agricultural commodities. The latter form several 'standard sequences' distinguished by the choice of a main commodity supplemented with several additional ones. The 'Standard Sequence I' uses grain (ideogram GRANUM) as a main commodity which is usually supplemented with either a combination of figs (ideogram NI) and wine (ideogram VINUM) or olives (ideogram OLIVA) and two unidentified commodities represented by ideograms *304 and *302 with various phonetic complements (DI, E, KI, MI, RA, RO),[4] or by other combinations of these five

[1] Occasional use of horizontal lines for separation of sections of the text is attested already in Linear A, and one Linear A tablet is fully ruled (PK 1). See Palaima (1988).

[2] Texts without ideograms are attested in both scripts. In Linear B they are classified as V series.

[3] If syllabic signs used as ideograms are taken into account, several other texts and series can be added (PY Aa, MY, Ge, etc.).

[4] The form of Linear A *302 most closely resembles Linear B *121 (HORDEUM

additional commodities. Oxen (ideogram BOS) and yet another unidentified commodity represented by a syllabic sign E used as an ideogram are sometimes also added to this sequence. Several most representative texts of this group from the Hagia Triada archive are listed in Table 7.2, where Linear B values are used for transliteration of Linear A syllabic signs, conventional abbreviated forms of Latin words in capitals represent ideograms whose meaning is known, and capital letters stand for Minoan fractions according to the system of transliteration introduced by GORILA.[5]

TABLE 7.2. *'Standard Sequence I'* (*grain with supplements*)

Text no.	Heading	Commodity
HT 14	*pu*-VIN *TE*	GRA 30, *302+*MI* 3, *302+*DI* 3, *304 9, OLIV 13
	a-pu₂–na-du	GRA 47, *302+*MI* 5, *302+*DI* 4, *304 6, OLIV 14
HT 21	*pi-ta-ka-se TE*	GRA 161, *302+*RO* 11, *302+*E* 3JE, *304 7JE, OLIV 1E
HT 44a	*i-qa-*118	GRA [ ], *302+*KI* 3, *302+*RO* 5[, *302+*RA* 5, OLIV 1[, *NI* 1, VIN [ ]
HT 44b	[ ]-*ja TE*	GRA F, NI [ ], VIN 75
HT 50a		[ ]GRA [ ], *302+KI E, *302+MI [ ], *302+E J, *304 1J, OLIV 3, OLIV+TU EF
HT 91	*i-ka* *326	GRA X, *304 A, *302+KI A, *302+RO A, *302+MI A, OLIV A, NI A, VIN A, *E* 5
HT 114a	*ki-ri-ta₂*	
	sa-ra₂	GRA 10, *302 7, NI 1, VIN 1, BOS 3
HT 121	*sa-ra₂*	GRA 5, *302 4, NI 2, VIN 3, BOS 3

The 'Standard Sequence II' uses an ideogram *303 in combination with figs (NI) as basic commodities. The graphic form of Linear A sign *303 most closely resembles the Linear B ideogram for *cyperus* (*125, CYP), but its distribution in the Linear A texts does not fit the use of this relatively rare Linear B sign. The Linear A

*303 is one of the most frequently attested agricultural commodities at Hagia Triada and the most frequently attested commodity at Khania. Most probably it represents barley (Goold and Pope 1955). R. Palmer recently proposed to identify Linear A *303 as emmer wheat (Palmer 1995). This identification, however, implies a reinterpretation of AB *120 (GRANUM) as barley, and Linear B *121 (HORDEUM) as wheat, which is unconvincing.[6] Additional commodities found in the lists of this type are: wine (VIN), grain (GRA), *302 with various phonetic compliments (RO, MI, NE, TA), *510, oxen (BOS), and some commodity exceptionally recorded phonetically (*sa-ra-ra*). Hagia Triada texts which belong to this sequence are listed in Table 7.3.

TABLE 7.3. *'Standard Sequence II'* (**303 and NI with supplements*)

Text no.	Heading	Commodity
HT 27a		*303 9JEB, NI 10B, VIN 7
HT 30	*sa-ra₂*	*303 [ ], NI 7D, VIN 8J, *302+*TA* DD, *510 D, *sa-ra-ra* J, BOS 1
	ki-ro	*303 8, NI DD, VIN J, BOS 1[, *302+*TA* D
HT 89		*303 2JE, NI 2E, VIN 6[
HT 94a	*sa-ra₂*	*303 5, NI 3H, [ ] 2
	*318–*306 11	*303 DD, NI DD
	[ ] 11	*303 J, NI D
HT 99a	*a-du sa-ra₂*	*303 4, NI 4, VIN 1H, GRA+*QE* [ ]
HT 100	*sa-ra₂*	*303 5E, NI 2DD, VIN 2J, *302+*RO* 2H, *302+MI 3, *302+NE JE

The basic agricultural commodity used in the 'Standard Sequence III' is expressed by one or more variants of two ideograms transnumerated by GORILA as *508–*510 and *550–*552. The most common supplementary commodities in this sequence are syllabic sign E used as an ideogram (once with a phonetic comple-

'barley'), but it probalby stands for olive oil because of its close association with olives and the frequent use of numerous phonetic complements, which is a typical feature of Linear B *130 (OLEUM 'oil'). See Palaima (1987), 301–6.

[5] For an assessment of their possible values see Was (1971); Bennett (1980); Facchetti (1994).

[6] The only certain ratio of commodities represented by Linear B *120, *NI* (figs), and *121 distributed as rations is found in PY An 128, where it is 1:1:2. I do not understand why R. Palmer interprets it as 1 + 1 : 2 (Palmer 1989: 97–8), since all three commodities were distributed to the same group of personnel. All other instances of small quantities of *121 and large quantities of *120 prove nothing, since in most cases neither periodicity of rations (daily, monthly, annual?) nor qualification of the personnel (in ancient Mesopotamia both male and female recipients of rations were graded in descending order from 100 *silà* to 10 *silà* of barley per month) is known.

ment KA), *302 with phonetic compliments (NE, RI, TA, TU), *303, *308, and wine (VIN). Several commodities are recorded in one of the texts of this sequence (HT 23a) phonetically, and one of them is *sa-sa-me*, which is most probably a Minoan equivalent of Mycenaean *sa-sa-ma* 'sesame' (MY Ge 602), being a Semitic loan-word in both languages. Hagia Triada texts which belong to this sequence are listed in Table 7.4.

TABLE 7.4. *'Standard Sequence III'*
(**508–*510 and *550–*552 with supplements*)

Text no.	Heading	Commodity
HT 23a	*ka-na*	*303 B, *308 H, *302+NE H, *302+TU H, *302+RI H, *550 H, VIN 10, *510 10, *508 10, *E* 17, *21ʲ-ri-tu-qa K, sa-sa-me K, SI+ME 10, ko-ru 1
HT 23b	*ni-ra*	*303 B, *302 B, *550 [ ], *510 [ ], *508 1, *E* 7
HT 32	*307 *sa-ra₂*	*308 J, *302+NE JK, *510 1K, *508 1, *550 1
HT 33	*sa-ra₂*	*401 VAS+*304 [ ], *510 1E, *508 L²L², E+ KA EL², *552 D
HT 35	*ti-ti-ka* *326 *i-ku-ta*	*303 1, *550 B, *302+RI B, *308 B, *302+TA [ ], *E* 5, *510 K, VIN D
HT 60	[ ]	*302+RI K, *549 [ ], VIN K, *302 5, *508 [ ], *510 L²

Unfortunately, as long as the headings of all these texts remain incomprehensible, it is impossible to determine the true purpose of these lists of commodities.[7] Comparison with the Linear B and other archival traditions shows that such lists could be records of taxation, offerings, work assessment, yield calculation, or ration lists. Yet at least four texts belonging to the 'Standard Sequence II' (HT 27a, 89, 94a, 100) can be positively recognized as ration lists on the basis of their structure, which is shown in Table 7.5. It can be seen from this representation that the lists of agricultural commodities which were treated separately in connection with the 'Standard

[7] For the possible interpretation of Linear A headings with *a-du* (HT 99a in the 'Standard Sequence II') as records of work assessment, see Uchitel and Finkelberg (1995).

Sequence II' in fact constitute the second parts of these texts, being preceded by lists of men. The latter are represented either by phonetically written words (*i-mi-sa-ra, ki-da*[, *ku-*305*[, *sa-ra-di, ma-i-mi, ta-ra*) or by ideograms (VIR, VIR+KA, VIR+*313a, VIR+*313b, *67+*317+QE, *86, *304+PA, *305), or by syllabic signs used as ideograms (KI, RE, QE, TA, TI+A). The ideogram for man[8] with and without phonetic or pictorial complements present in all four texts identifies all of them as lists of men.

TABLE 7.5. *Hagia Triada ration lists*

Text no.	Heading	List	Total
HT 27a	*ti-ni-ta* *307	VIR 90, *86 51, RE 20, *i-mi-sa-ra* 43,]QE 21, *ki-da*[	
	]*ki-*310	*ku-*305*[, *sa-ra-di* 5, VIR 42 *303 9JEB, NI 10B, VIN 7	*ku-ro* 355
HT 89	*a-sa-ra₂* *307	*305 23, *65+*317+QE 22, *ma-i-mi* 24, VIR+*313a 13, *ta-ra* 5 *303 2JE, NI 2E, VIN 6[	*ku-ro* 87
HT 94a	*ka-pa*	VIR 62, *86 20, *TI+A* 7, VIR+ *313b 18, *TA* 4	*ku-ro* 110
	sa-ra₂	*303 5, NI 3H, [ ] 2	
	*318–*306 11	*303 DD, NI DD	
	[ ] 11	*303 J, NI D	
HT 100	[ ]	VIR+KA 58, *304+PA [4], TI+ A 12, KI 2, *305 5, VIR+*313a 16	*ku-ro* 97
	sa-ra₂	*303 5E, NI 2DD, VIN 2J, *302+ RO 2H, *302+MI 3, *302+NE JE	

The sign *86 is a picture of a ship and probably represents sailors, indicating that at least two groups (recorded in HT 27a and HT 94a) are arranged by occupation. It should be noticed also that the ideogram *304 represents an agricultural commodity attested in the 'Standard Sequence I', but the same ideogram with phonetic complement PA found in HT 100 stands for a group of men.

[8] GORILA editors follow a traditional assumption that in contrast to Linear B, Linear A script has no separate signs for men and women. This assumption seems to me incredible. In my opinion, Linear A *306 is a possible candidate as a sign meaning 'woman'.

Phonetic signs functioning as ideograms are probably abbreviations.

The only Minoan word whose meaning is known from the context—*ku-ro* 'total'—separates lists of men from lists of agricultural commodities. In HT 27a two lists under two separate headings are totalled together and a single list of agricultural commodities follows them, while in HT 94a, by contrast, three lists of commodities under three separate headings follow one list of men with a total. The ideogram *307 found in the headings of two other texts (HT 27a and HT 89) is otherwise attested as a collective designation of men.[9] The heading of HT 94a, *ka-pa*, is a Cretan place name attested in the Linear B archive from Knossos (B 5752, E 71) (McArthur 1993: 69). It follows from the structure of this text that 110 men from this place subdivided into five professional groups were reclassified into three subgroups for the purpose of rationing. This means that, as in ancient Mesopotamia, the personnel of HT 94a were graded in descending order according to the quantities of their rations. If *306 indeed stands for women, this gradation reflects the sex and age composition of the personnel: 88 men classified as *sa-ra₂*, 11 women (*318–*306), and 11 children (heading broken). There is no indication of such a gradation in other Hagia Triada ration lists, but it is possible that the personnel of HT 89 were classified by age group.[10] The individual rations of *303 vary in these lists between $\frac{1}{20}$ (HT 94a, HT 100) to $\frac{1}{30}$ (HT 27a, HT 89) of the largest capacity measure, corresponding approximately to the barley rations recorded in the Linear B Pylian Fn series (V3 and V2 according to the Linear B system of measurements),[11] which were probably issued on a daily basis.[12]

The closest Linear B parallel to the Hagia Triada ration lists is

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[9] *307 appears under the headings with *a-du* in the same position as sign TE and the word *sa-ra₂* (Uchitel and Finkelberg 1995: 33–4).

[10] For the possibility that *ma-i-mi* in HT 89 means 'grown-ups' see Uchitel (1994–5), 85 n. 24.

[11] The Linear B capacity measure transliterated as V is $\frac{1}{60}$ of the largest measure. For Fn ration rates see Palmer (1963), 232.

[12] Rations of V2 multiplied by 30 give one large measure of barley, which is exactly twice the attested monthly grain rations issued to male supervisors of female work-teams (Pylian Ab series), confirming the ratio between barley (*121) and wheat (*120) in PY An 128 (see Palmer 1995).

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found in PY An 128, which records the distribution of grain, figs,[13] and barley to three groups of personnel:

An 128, r.	1.	[ ]-*ka-ta*	VIR	41
	2.	[ ]-*ka-ta po-ru-qo-to*	VIR	6
	3.	*ke-re-te ka-si-ko-no*	VIR	5
	4–10.	*vacant*		
	11.	GRA 2 T6 V5 Z2		
	12.	[NI] 2 T6 V5		
	13–15.	*vacant*		
v.	a	Z[2		
		HORD 5 T3 V4		

In contrast to parallel Linear A texts, groups of personnel here are not represented either by phonetically written words or by ideograms, but by a combination of phonetic writing and ideograms which is repeated in every line. The only fully preserved group of syllabic signs in (l. 3) means 'Cretans, kinsmen'. Individual rations amount to V3 of grain and figs and T1 of barley, being too low for monthly rates (a tenth of the regular monthly ration) and too high for daily rates (three times more than the regular daily ration).[14] It seems, therefore, that a single instalment of food issued for a group of foreigners is recorded here.

If the combination of the ideograms for men with those for agricultural commodities can indeed serve to identify ration lists, similar texts can also be found at Khania. However, their formal arrangement was different in this archive. The best-preserved text, KH 7, may be used as a representative example. Three groups of men qualified as VIR+*313b appear there under three different headings as recipients of various quantities of a commodity represented by the ideogram *303+D. In contrast to Hagia Triada, where, as we have seen, lists of agricultural commodities follow lists of men, at Khania each group of recipients is accompanied by the ideogram for an agricultural commodity, directly after the numeral. In fact, this practice is more similar to the arrangement of the Linear B documents from Pylos classified as Ab series, where groups of women with children are supplied with rations of grain

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[13] The ideogram for figs (NI) is restored at the beginning of l. 12 because amounts of figs are always equal to amounts of grain in Pylian ration lists (Palmer 1989: 97).

[14] Identical rations of barley (T1) and figs (V3) are recorded in the Fs series at Knossos, but flour (*129, FARINA) is distributed there instead of grain. The identity of the recipients, however, is uncertain.

TABLE 7.6. *Khania ration lists*

Text no.	Heading	Recipient	Commodity
KH 7a	[ ]-*ne* *317+KI	*334 4	*303+D 1[
	[ ]-*i*		*303+E K
	e-na-si	VIR+*313b 10	*303+D J
	i-ja-pa-me ta-ta		
	qa-ti-ki	VIR+*313b 4	*303+D B
	*se-*305*		
	ku-[ ]-*ko-e*	VIR+[*313b] 18	*303+D 1EJL²
KH 9	*a-si-su-po-a*	VIR+*307 [ ]	NI EB
	[*u-ta*]-*i-si*		*303+D J
	SI+TA₂		*304 1
KH 14	[ ]-*ra a-ma-ja*		*303 6
		EQU 2	*303 K
		VIR+*307 2	*303 [ ]
KH 19		*306.VIR+*307 13	*302+TA B
KH 26		VIR 60	NI 2EL⁴

and figs. KH 7a and several other similar texts from Khania are listed in Table 7.6.

Several other differences between Hagia Triada and Khania can be observed. Thus, in KH 14 two horses (ideogram EQUUS)[15] appear in the same position as two human recipients of rations (VIR+*307). The ideogram *334 found in KH 7a in a similar position also represents some animal, since it appears also in KH 6 side by side with a goat (CAPᵐ) and an ox (BOS). This combination of animals with men in the same position in the text practically rules out any use of agricultural commodities other than rations combined with fodder.

Agricultural commodities, however, do not appear in sequences as in Hagia Triada: instead, only one commodity is supplied to every group of recipients. This commodity is predominantly *303, reinforcing the view that it is to be identified as barley, which was used as basic food ration both in Mycenaean Greece and in ancient Mesopotamia. At Khania this ideogram is usually ligatured with

[15] Linear A *336 is not identified by GORILA as an equivalent of Linear B *105 (EQUUS 'horse'), but a picture of the horse's head is self-evident.

signs for fractional numerals (*303+D, *303+E) used as pictorial complements. Other commodities used for rations at Khania are figs (NI), *302+TA, and *304.

In several instances the ideograms for agricultural commodities appear directly after headings ([   ]-*i* *303+E K, [*u-ta*]-*i-si* *303+D J, SI+TA₂*304 1, [   ]-*ra a-ma-ja* *303 6) without any indication of the number of recipients, as expected. It should be admitted that the purpose of these entries remains obscure as long as the meaning of the headings remains unknown.[16] The reading of one of these headings ([*u-ta*]-*i-si*) is restored on the basis of KH 16, where this word appears in a similar context, and KH 7b, where its variant spelling *u-ta-i-se* is attested (Table 7.7).

TABLE 7.7. *Occurrences*
of u-ta-i-si *at Khania*

Text no.	Heading	Ideogram	Numeral
KH 7b	*u-ta-i-se*	*303+D	J
KH 9	[*u-ta*]-*i-si*	*303+D	J
KH 16	*u-ta-i-si*	*303+D	[ ]

In spite of these obvious differences in their formal structure, the two groups of texts from Hagia Triada and Khania share several features in common. We have seen that the 'Standard Sequence II' used in ration lists at Hagia Triada is based upon the *303 commodity; supplementary commodities of this sequence, such as figs (NI) and *302, also appear at Khania; various pictorial complements to the ideogram for men, such as *306, *307, *313, are found in both groups of texts. Furthermore, the second part of HT 94a is arranged according to a principle similar to the arrangement of Khania tablets, with the numerals which appear twice in the headings introducing lists of agricultural commodities:[17]

HT 94a. 3–5:	*sa-ra,*		*303	5
			NI	3H
			[ ]	2
	*318-*306	11	*303	DD
			NI	DD

[16] For the possible interpretation of *a-ma-ja* as 'monthly' see Uchitel (1994–5), 82–5.

[17] This reading of HT 94a. 3–5 is based upon GORILA 5. 73 (corrigenda).

[   ] 11 *303 J
                      NI   D

It is interesting that the formal arrangement of one of the recently published tablets from Petras in eastern Crete follows the pattern of Khania ration lists:

PE 1 *u-ka-re a-sa-si-na*
      ku-pa-ri   VIR   5[3
                 GRA+PA 26]
      e-ka[ ]   VIR   72
                 GRA+PA 36

The only difference between this text and the group of texts from Khania discussed above is that the ideogram for grain (GRANUM) is used for rations in place of *303 (barley?). It is noticeable that half of a large measure of grain is supplied here per person, which is exactly T5 according to the Linear B system of measurement,[18] or one monthly ration supplied to male supervisors of female work-teams at Pylos (Palmer 1959).

Two groups of Linear A texts from Hagia Triada (HT 27a, 89, 94a, 100) and Khania (KH 7a, 9, 14, 19, 26) and one text from Petras (PE 1) can thus be identified as ration lists, consisting of combinations of lists of men with lists of agricultural commodities. Different scribal conventions were used at Hagia Triada on the one hand, and at Khania and Petras on the other. At Hagia Triada lists of recipients precede lists of agricultural commodities, while at Khania and Petras each group of recipients is directly followed by an agricultural commodity. It is difficult to say to what extent these differences reflected differences in the systems of rationing, but it may be concluded that such an important mechanism of the redistributive economy as the ration system was operational at all three palatial centres of Minoan Crete.

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[18] T is one-tenth of the largest capacity measure.

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8

'Archives' and 'Scribes' and Information Hierarchy in Mycenaean Greek Linear B Records

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Within the context of the ancient written records and archives discussed in this volume, the Mycenaean Greek Linear B material is distinctive in the following ways:

(1) The clay documents at each site are 'temporary' records used to monitor economic activities within textually unspecified administrative periods of less than a year.

(2) All records seem to be 'active', i.e. we have no 'dead' archives.

(3) All records are 'anonymous'. None contains any direct reference to the scribe who wrote it or any scribal signatures or seal impressions. There is no attested word for 'scribe' and no clear evidence to associate any of the officials mentioned in the texts with

Note. For bibliography see p. 188.

When I speak of the 'location' of Linear B tablets in what follows I mean an architecturally or otherwise defined spatial unit at an archaeological site, as opposed to 'site', which refers to the site as a whole. I occasionally use 'tablets' to refer generically to Linear B inscribed tablets, sealings, and labels. Elsewhere 'tablets' means specifically Mycenaean clay documents of the leaf-shaped and page-shaped classes, i.e. clay records which are not sealings or labels. This should be clear from the context.

Linear B inscribed tablets, sealings, and labels from the so-called 'Room of the Chariot Tablets' (RCT) at Knossos are important comparative evidence for understanding the function of the 'Archives Complex' (AC) within the administrative system of the palatial centre at Pylos. Jan Driessen kindly let me use before publication his comprehensive treatment of the RCT inscriptions (Driessen 2000).

the writers of the tablets (but cf. Bennet 2001 and Driessen 1992; 1994–5).

(4) There are no 'official' documents, e.g. contracts, documents of ownership or property transfer, loans, wills, records of merchants and traders, designed to be kept in the possession of the parties involved and/or in state or city archives and to have probative value in legal proceedings.

(5) No documents attest to a broader use of writing or higher 'public' literacy: there are no Mycenaean literary, judicial, historical-propagandistic documents, no 'private' economic records, no personal or official letters, and no documents relating to scribal training or intended for scribal reference such as syllabic *abecedaria*, lexical lists, or sample forms of documents.

(6) The scale of documentation is comparatively small. There are now *c.*5,500 inscribed clay documents and *c.*160 painted vase inscriptions from all the sites in the Mycenaean palatial period (*c.*1450–1200 BC) (Driessen 2000: 21). These average fewer than 14 phonetic or ideographic (non-numerical) signs (not words!) per text. Fewer than 150 tablets have texts exceeding 50 non-numerical signs (Palaima 1990*b*: 84 and nn. 3–5).

Mycenologists have therefore been challenged to study this evidence from many different perspectives. We have identified scribal hands through the study of palaeography and other diagnostic features such as spelling, tablet typology, and habits of text presentation, and have then studied scribal assignments and the overall systems and procedures used to provide and preserve economic information at individual Mycenaean sites. In most cases we have precise knowledge of the find contexts of individual tablets and even fragments, and can study them in their archaeological contexts and thereby determine the function of the locations where inscriptions were found and why they were found there. We have also identified coherent groups of tablets (by subjects and by scribal hands) and how they are related to one another. Thus we have well-developed sensibilities about how scribes worked individually and within larger systems.

I shall discuss how information is assembled, used, and stored on clay records written in the Linear B script[1] at different ad-

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[1] I have tried everywhere to give references to clear and succinct treatments of relevant points. For the way in which the Linear B script developed, worked,

ministrative levels and for different purposes within the record-keeping systems of the Mycenaean Greek palatial period. I shall focus on records from the palatial centre at Pylos (*c.*1200 BC) in south-west Greece[2] and its AC with a view to understanding better the distinctive features of Mycenaean record-keeping and what is meant within Mycenaean culture by such concepts as 'archives' and 'scribe'. I shall refer to records from other palatial sites of the Mycenaean full-palatial period (*c.*1450–1200 BC),[3] where they supplement or complement the Pylos data.[4]

First I shall discuss the archaeological contexts of the extant

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and was used and the subjects treated in the texts, I recommend the following: Chadwick (1987*a*) (well-illustrated overview); Ruipérez and Melena (1996) (extensive up-to-date discussion of all aspects of the textual evidence incorporating many new interpretative approaches and advances); Palaima (1987*a*) (succinct discussion of literacy); Duhoux (1985) (sound overview of Linear B as a functioning script and its relationship to other Aegean script systems); Palaima (1988*b*) (exhaustive treatment of the evidence for the origin and development of Linear B); Bartonek (1983) (summary of the subjects treated on tablets from all the sites and comparative analysis between sites of such important data as the amount of information on tablets); Bartonek (1992) (systematic analysis of the Mycenaean *lexicon*); Piteros, Olivier, and Melena (1990) (the best introduction to inscribed sealings and their functions, using the sizeable collection from Thebes as a basis); Palaima (1996*a*) (concise treatment of how inscribed sealings relate to other administrative records); Killen (1994; 1996) (study of how sealings and other clay records relate to the administrative process of livestock management and preparations for state banquets); Palaima (2000) (study of the standard transactional vocabulary found in Linear B tablets and inscribed sealings); Palaima (1987*b*) (detailed comparative study of Mycenaean sealings, inscribed and uninscribed, in their Aegean context and of how sealings fit into the overall structure of Mycenaean economic administration); Pini (1997) (specialist study of the sealings, uninscribed and inscribed, from Pylos). The best general accounts of the interpretation of Mycenaean texts remain Ventris and Chadwick (1973) and Hiller and Panagl (1976). Hooker (1980) is also useful.

[2] Blegen and Rawson (1966) (the fundamental interpretative description of the archaeological remains from the site); Palaima and Shelmerdine (1984) (interdisciplinary specialist studies of the site as a functioning palatial centre); Shelmerdine (1998) (succinct discussion of the daily operation of the palatial centre).

[3] For the most recent overviews of the archaeological framework within which the textual material must be interpreted, cf. Rehak and Younger (1998) (from Minoan neopalatial to the period traditionally called the 'Mycenaean' period of Crete); Shelmerdine (1997) (comprehensive survey of the full-palatial period of the Greek mainland from the vantage point of both archaeological and textual data); Treuil, Darcque, *et al.* (1989) (the most recent 'global' overview of archaeological and textual evidence for Minoan and Mycenaean civilization by a team of specialists).

[4] For a recent full study of administrative texts from Mycenae, representative of a site with a limited number of 73 records found in free-standing buildings disconnected from the central palatial complex, cf. Varias Garcia (1993).

Linear B inscriptions and how they were used as administrative documents. This is necessary for proper interpretation of the archival aspects of the texts. I shall then present in general and theoretical terms Mycenological views, first of the AC and other spatially delimited assemblages of Linear B records; and second on the status of 'scribes'. Finally, I shall discuss a dossier of tablets that show how writing was used for processing information at different levels within the administrative hierarchy of the palatial center at Pylos. These will illuminate points addressed in other contributions to this volume.

Pylos is the only Mycenaean palatial centre with a centralized system-dominant[5] location for the collection, processing, and storage of written documents to which the term 'Archives Complex' has been applied (Figures 8.1, 8.2).[6] Six other sites (Knossos in central Crete and Khania in west Crete (Figure 8.3); Mycenae, Tiryns, and Midea in the Argolid in the south central Greek mainland and Thebes in Boeotia in the north central Greek mainland (Figure 8.4)) have produced inscribed administrative documents, but none has an administrative *locus* comparable to the Pylos AC. This may be due, at least in part, to the hazardous nature of archaeological discoveries. Variables include the care and precision of excavation, especially in the detection and recovery of inscribed materials; the extent of excavation at different sites; the settlement histories of particular sites, especially where later habitation has destroyed important areas of a late Bronze Age settlement; and the precise moments when areas where clay records were used and stored underwent the burning destructions necessary to preserve the texts.[7] Thus on current evidence it is difficult to prove that any of the discernible differences between sites in how surviving written records

[5] By 'system-dominant' I mean containing a significant percentage of documents from the site, a significant percentage of longer texts of a later (or 'higher') stage in information processing, a significant 'coverage' of the kinds of subjects that are treated at a more rudimentary level of recording elsewhere at the centre, a significant concentration of 'scribes', and clear evidence for scribal interaction and hierarchy. I prefer not to try to quantify what is 'significant', but to leave it in each case to be justified by argument.

[6] In fact, it is problematical whether, or at least in what sense, the term 'archives' should be applied to the assemblage of inscribed documents in these two rooms (see below). Cf. Driessen (1997; 2000) and Bennet (2001). For a full view of the Pylos scribal administration cf. Palaima (1988a); Palaima and Wright (1985); Sjöquist and Åström (1985); Palmer (1994); and Olivier (1997).

[7] For the importance of identifying burning destruction levels at sites with Mycenaean tablets, cf. Hallager, Vlasakis, and Hallager (1992).
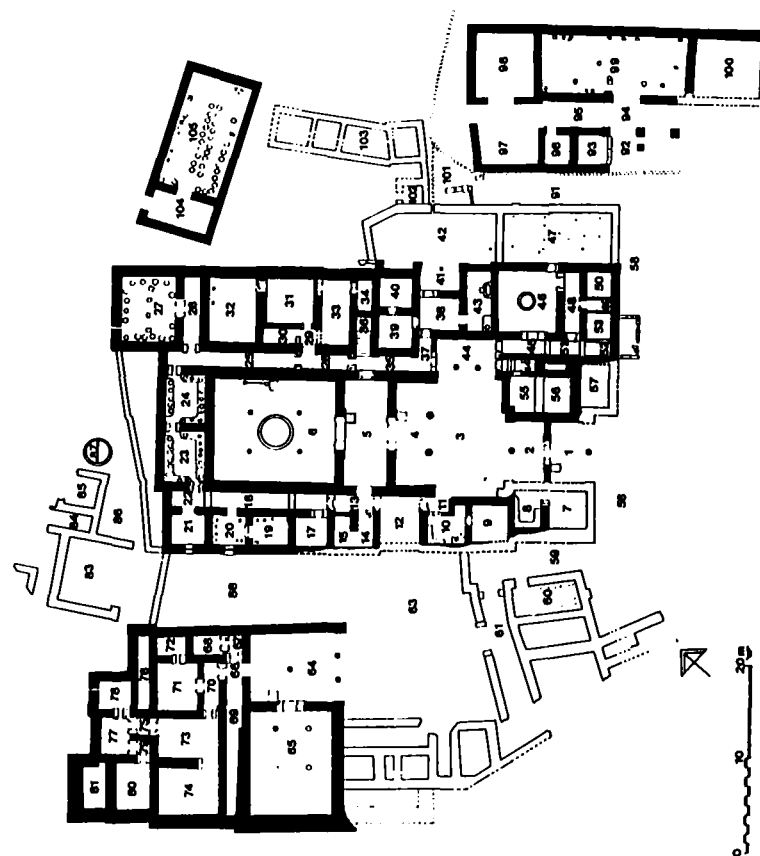

FIG. 8.1. Pylos, plan of final state of the Palace of Nestor (Palaima and Wright 1985: 253 ill. 2). Archives Complex = rooms 7–8. North-east Workshop = rooms 92–100. Circles in areas 1 and 2 are column bases, visible at right of Figs. 8.2 and 8.9 in grid-squares 09 and 89

were used[8] is meaningfully representative of how Linear B was used in general at a given site. We cannot assume that differences apparent in the selective extant data were the result of conscious responses by those who directed or worked within the local economic administrative systems to the peculiar needs of individual centres and the territories which they controlled and exploited.[9]
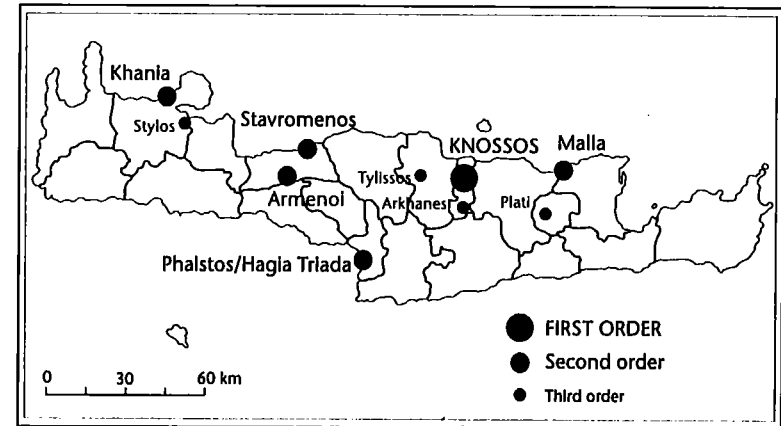

FIG. 8.3. Mycenaean Crete in LM III showing hierarchical ranking of sites (Bennet 1990: 208 fig. 5). Knossos and Khania are the sites with Linear B 'tablets'

Noteworthy is the conservative uniformity in document typology (Figure 8.5), text formatting, palaeographic traditions, phonological, logographical, and metrical character repertories and values,

[8] For example, I argued in Palaima (1988a) that the higher proportion of longer texts at Pylos (Bartoněk 1983) could be attributed to the existence of the AC and the centripetal force of the administrative system at Pylos, which required collecting information about individual transactions, often on leaf-shaped tablets, and then processing it, with correction, revision, and supplementation, in recensions and summaries, often on page-shaped tablets. This seems to be confirmed by the architectural scale and design of the palatial centre at Pylos and the relative size and complexity of the regional economic processes which the centre used writing to monitor and control. For the latter, cf. Bennet (1998). It is true that the Knossian system of departments and bureaux seems less centralized, yet there are a few long tablets from Knossos, and it is difficult to imagine that within given economic spheres the same need for summarizing and processing information did not exist.

[9] Cf. Bennet (1985) for how the administration at Knossos functioned in relationship to centres of different scales in central and western Cretan territories. Bennet (1990) compares Minoan-Mycenaean regional administration with the systems that prevailed in the classical-Roman and Venetian periods. Bennet (1998) reconstructs how the palatial territory of Mycenaean Pylos developed and functioned.
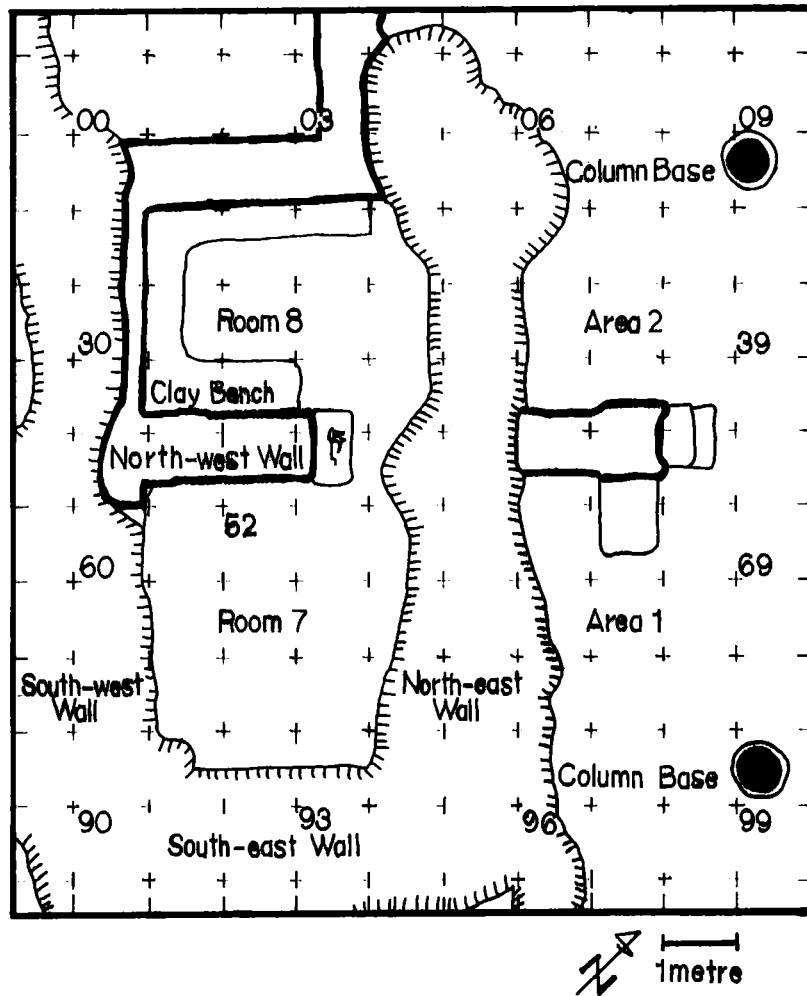

FIG. 8.2. Pylos, Archives Complex with realigned grid (courtesy Kevin Pluta).
Circles at right in grid-squares 09 and 89 are column bases seen in areas
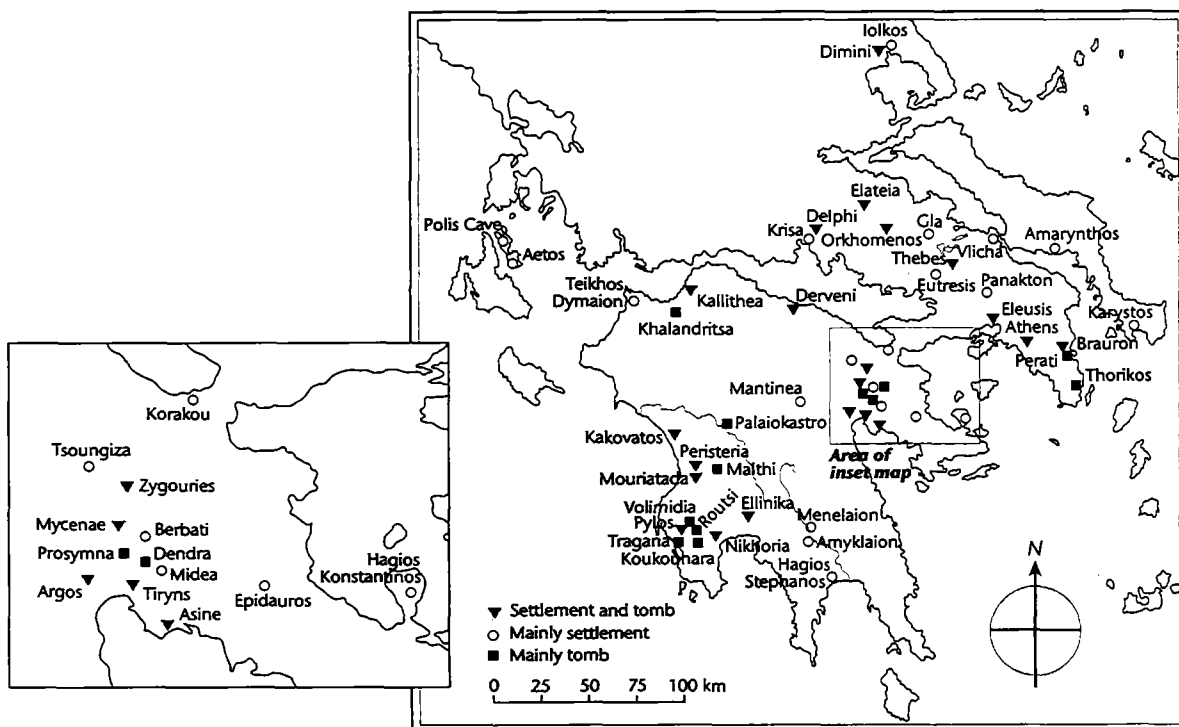1 and 2 in Fig. 8.1. Grid-square 52 contains tablet–transport–basket labels

FIG. 8.4. The Mycenaean mainland in the palatial period (Shelmerdine 1997: 538, fig. 1). Pylos, Tiryns, Mycenae, Midea, and Thebes are the palatial sites with Linear B 'tablets'

FIG. 8.5. Drawings of Linear B documents from Pylos. Page-shaped tablets Cn 719, Gn 720, and An 723. Modified leaf-shaped tablet Ta 721. Tablet–transport–basket label Wa 114. Note ideographic signs and numerical signs at right ends of most lines after phonetic text (Bennett 1955: 15, 84)
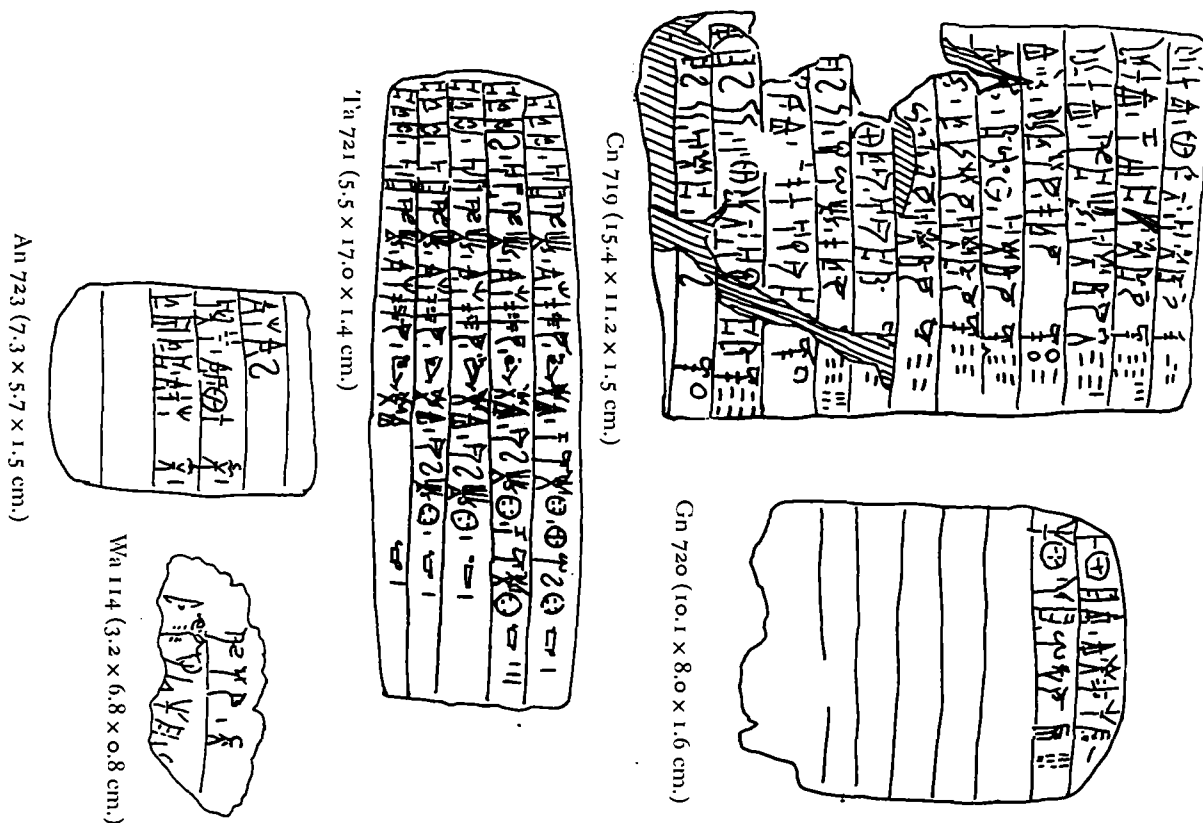
transactional vocabulary, and even 'dialect' that prevails among sites in separate regions.[10] Apart from a few typological peculiarities of the clay records[11] from what seems to be an early administrative unit at Knossos, the basic forms of records and procedures for using them remain fixed, allowing for ingenious minor variations by scribes in order to solve particular formatting and data-entry problems,[12] over a period of at least 200 years. This in itself argues for a common and traditional 'professionalism' among the 'administrators' who wrote the records.

Knossos is the only other 'Mycenaean' palatial centre with a quantity of records distributed across the site sufficiently representative of a full range of written administrative activities at any given period (Figure 8.6). Unfortunately, chronological problems associated with the now *c*.4,266 Knossos tablets and fragments (Driessen 2000: 22–3)[13] still make it impossible to reconstruct its overall scribal administration as accurately as can be done in the case of Pylos.[14] With the exception of 2–4 tablets, all of the *c*.1,115

[10] For a good understanding of the appearance of sealings, cf. the plates in Pini (1997). On document typology, cf. also Ruipérez and Melena (1996), 52–3. One can speak of an 'administrative κοινή' among the mainland sites. The Khania tablets are so similar to the Knossos tablets (Palaima 1992–3; Olivier 1993; 1996) that one must posit some direct influence in the scribal tradition. Besides the close palaeographic affinities between the tablets of 'scribes' KH 115 and KN 115, a text like KH Gq 5 conforms in information layout to the principles seen in records of similar subjects from Knossos (KN Gg series). For the common and limited repertory of transactional vocabulary, in the texts both of tablets and of inscribed sealings, cf. Palaima (2000a). On the minimal evidence for different dialects or idiolects in tablets coming from so many different regions, cf. Thompson (1996–7 [1998]) and Palaima (2002).

[11] For example, tablets known as '*simili*-joins', some rather exiguous tablets, and a distinctive 'transitional' sealing type from an early phase at Knossos. The first two of these might be inventive responses to the peculiar record-keeping necessities of the administrative unit in which they occur. At Pylos a few comparable exiguous tablets (e.g. La 628, La 632, and La 635) were found fallen into the central throne room (Room 6). The 'transitional' sealing (Weingarten 1988: 10–11) seems to be attributable to the change from Minoan Linear A text and sealing typology to Mycenaean Linear B typology. Cf. Palaima (1990b).

[12] For a clear example of a scribe efficiently arriving at solutions for rather complicated data entry, cf. Palaima (1999), with fuller references, and Del Freo (1998).

[13] Numbers estimated from the ongoing work of identifying and joining smaller fragments. Cf. Driessen (2000).

[14] The reconstruction by Olivier (1967) was predicated upon the assumption of a 'unity of the archives', which assigned all the surviving texts to a single destruction horizon. This has now been disproved. Olivier's scribal identifications and analyses of specialized administrative units are the prototypes for further study. See also Sjöquist and Åström (1991).
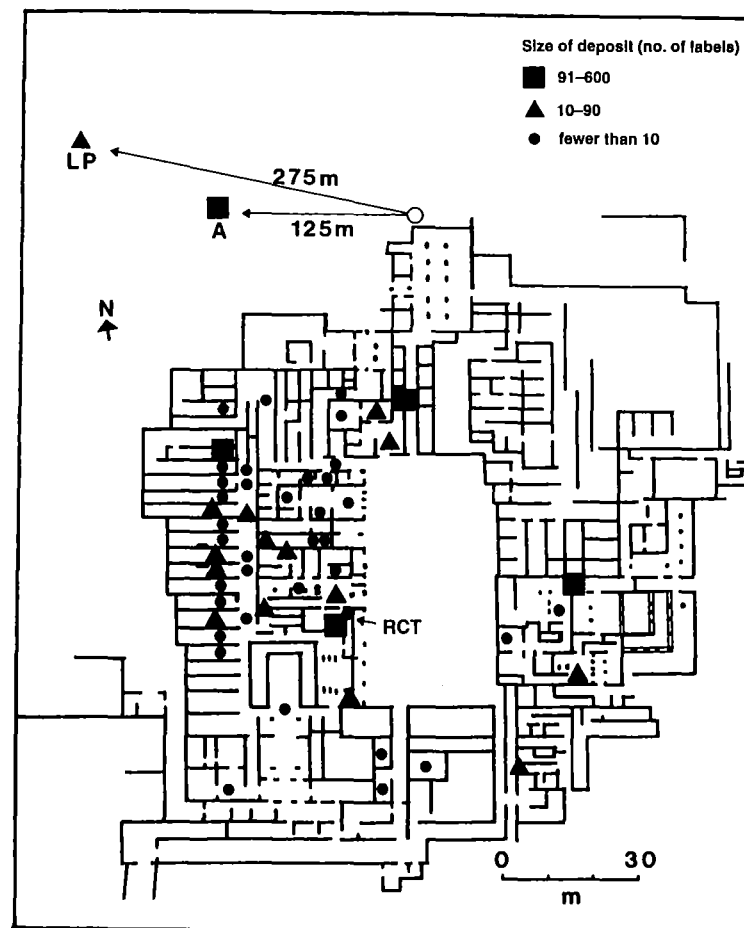

FIG. 8.6. Schematic plan of the palatial centre at Knossos indicating principal areas where inscribed Linear B documents were found (Bennet 1985: 232, ill. 1). A = Arsenal; LP = Little Palace; RCT = Room of the Chariot Tablets

inscribed documents[15] from the site of Pylos can be associated with the destruction stratum dated by most scholars to the end of LH

[15] Cf. Shelmerdine (1997), 563–65, for a discussion of recent discoveries of Linear B tablets, sealings, and inscribed stirrup-jar fragments from the Greek mainland. These include three tablet fragments (one 'joining' an existing tablet) and an inscribed sealing from Pylos. J. L. Melena has informed me (email, 4 Jan. 1999) that tablet La 623[+]La 625 and others from the *megaron* at Pylos might date from a phase earlier than the destruction of the palatial complex.

IIIB (*c.*1200 BC).[16] The Linear B inscriptions from other mainland sites also date to mid-/late LH IIIB (1250–1200 BC). The palaeographically diagnostic material from Khania in western Crete dates to the end of LM IIIB: 1 (*c.*1250 BC). It shows affinities with some of the Knossos inscriptions.[17] However, one unified group of *c.*648 Knossos tablets from a location known as the Room of the Chariot Tablets (hereafter RCT = the area marked 124 in Figure 8.7) is dated to the end of LM II (*c.*1400 BC). Other potential tablet-preserving destructions at Knossos (Figure 8.7) range from the end of LM IIIA: 1 (*c.*1375–1350 BC) to the end of LM IIIB (1200 BC) (Driessen 1997). The chief compensation for our inability to understand clearly how the site of Knossos functioned administratively overall at any of these destruction phases is the thorough study of the RCT material by Jan Driessen (Driessen 1989; 2000). This gives us a detailed picture of an administrative unit that used written records mainly for the monitoring and distribution of military equipment (chariots, body armour, horses) to a Greek-dominated military élite.[18] This bureaucratic unit serves as a good foil to the Pylos AC.[19]

It is important to emphasize several other points about the

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[16] Cf. Palaima (1988*a*) *sub* Hand 91 and Class iv, where I had identified Ae 995, Xa 1419, and Xn 1449 as palaeographically unique within the Pylos material, a uniqueness reinforced by the find contexts for Ae 995 and Xa 1419. The small fragments Ua 994 and Xa 1420 were tentatively associated with these two tablets respectively on the basis of associated findspots and some graphic characteristics. Tablet Xn 1449 has now been joined by Melena (1998: 165–7), to a larger tablet Vn 1339 of the North-east Workshop and attributed to Class iii. This leaves Ae 995 and Xa 1419 as certain evidence for 'Hand 91' and Ua 994 and Xa 1420 as less certain evidence for Class iv.

[17] For the chronological implications of the Khania material cf. Palaima (1992–3) and now Olivier (1996).

[18] Driessen (1996); Firth (1992–3). The RCT tablets are palaeographically unified and distinctive. The texts are isolated prosopographically and exhibit linguistic and typological peculiarities that separate them from the rest of the Knossos inscribed material and support the proposed early dating (Driessen 1990: 64–5; Weingarten 1988: 10–11).

[19] The AC contains *c.*767 non-fragmentary tablets (excluding X– series) and the RCT contains *c.*648 tablets (including 246 tablets of the Xd series, many of which are intentionally cut *simili*-joins). The raw numbers would put them potentially at the same level of administrative importance and function. However, the AC differs from the RCT in that it contains much longer and more informationally complex sets, a much greater number of full series devoted to widely varying economic subjects, 19 'labels' (series Wa) for tablet sets vs. o in the RCT, and scribes of three major palaeographical classes vs. scribes conforming to a single departmental writing style. Moreover, a number of scribes from the AC are not restricted to tablets found in the complex, but have tablets in other locations.

Scribes

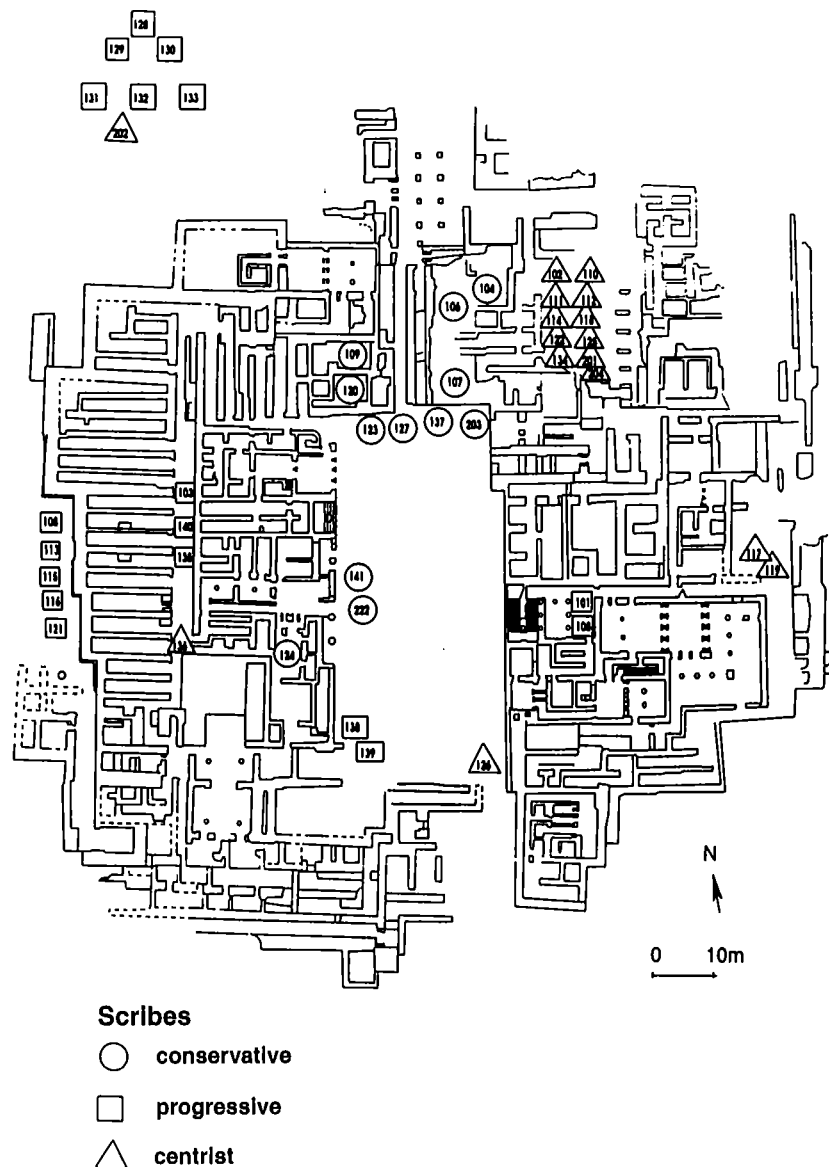○ conservative

□ progressive

△ centrist

FIG. 8.7. Distribution of scribal hands at Knossos classified according to conservative, centrist, and progressive palaeographic styles (Driessen 1997: 131, fig. 9). The RCT is identified by Scribe 124

Linear B texts. First, the evidence of Linear B writing so far known and published is concerned with economy: the control of goods, materials, and economic resources (animate and inanimate) and/or the management of economic activities. These include:[20]

- the centralized acquisition of raw materials through regional tax assessments, specific levies, standardized or emergency recycling, and perhaps through middleman exchanges involving 'payments' (Killen 1995);
- the distribution, transfer, and delivery of raw materials to manufacturers or workshops (conspicuous at Pylos is the 'joinery' or 'wheel-assembly' workshop mentioned as *a-mo-te-jo* in the texts and located in the North-east Building, rooms 92–100 in Figure 8.1) and of agricultural products and manufactured goods and artefacts to human recipients (including rations to a sizeable dependent labour force) or to divinities (as offerings or preparations for sacrifices or contributions to commensal banqueting ceremonies);
- the production, refurbishing, and storage of finished goods within specialized industries (wool and linen cloth production; leather work; woodworking; the manufacture of perfumed oil; bronze production; military equipment; pottery; furniture; work with precious materials such as gold, ivory, and lapis lazuli);
- agricultural production (including wheat, barley, figs, olives, honey, olive oil, wine, spices);
- management of livestock (sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, deer, horses);
- supervision of land tenure as a system of reciprocally obligatory compensation, support, and/or reward of individuals for various levels of service to the palatial centres or within religious districts and sanctuaries;
- inventories (e.g. of military equipment, vessels, and furniture).

The palatial centres also monitor on tablets human beings and their disposition, their presence or absence, their status, and their aggregate numbers in specific 'assignments' (designated by reference to place or person 'in charge'): dependent workers (especially women workers in the elaborate cloth production in-

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[20] The following list is representative, not exhaustive. For a survey of the textual and archaeological evidence for Mycenaean economy, cf. Killen (1985), and Voutsaki and Killen (2001).

dustries (Chadwick 1988)), specialist workers (e.g. wall-builders, 'architects', cowherds, fire-kindlers, shipbuilders, bakers, 'honeymasters', leather workers, potters, bow-makers, throne-makers, fullers, *kuanos*-workers, goldsmiths, bronzesmiths). The focus is on palatial interests. Evidence for a 'temple sphere' is difficult to interpret. Certainly there are no 'archives' or 'deposits' of tablets within the palatial centres that are devoted strictly to the economy of religious institutions. Our knowledge is limited by the fact that we have little in the way of archaeological documentation for the provincial sanctuaries, shrines, and religious personnel that are amply attested in the documents.[21]

This near-total focus on economy[22] applies to records on clay documents (leaf-shaped tablets, page-shaped tablets, labels, sealings: Figure 8.5). The large repertory and frequent use of Linear B ideographic/logographic characters on these documents, and the peculiar way in which they are used—divorced from 'lexical syntax' and in 'bookkeeping slots' after individual or aggregate entries (Figure 8.5)—all reinforce the economic and accounting nature of the documents.[23] The other main class of materials inscribed in

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[21] Cf. Killen (1985), 255–6, 288–90, and Palaima (forthcoming *a*). Extra-palatial written information is extremely limited, if not non-existent.

[22] Even certain military registers among the Pylos tablets which are generally viewed as non-economic might have an economic purpose, since they monitor manpower contributed from specific communities and individuals and the provision of such human resources might be considered in determining the levels of obligation that these communities have in other economic spheres. In the Ma taxation series and the Na flax series, communities are granted exemptions and deferments because of their specialist workers.

[23] In Fig. 8.5 the ideograms occur at the far right of the tablets and before numerical signs: circle = '100', horizontal line = '10' and vertical line = '1'. The ideograms are: rams and she-goat (Cn 719), wine (Gn 720), footstools (Ta 721), man (An 723). Tablets, excluding small fragments, without non-numerical ideograms are exceedingly rare. The main exceptions are the Vc and Vd '*simili*-join' tablets from the RCT and other V- tablets from the RCT and elsewhere at Knossos (mainly registries of single human beings without the MAN ideogram). There are *c.*104 V- tablets from the RCT. By contrast, the entire site of Pylos yielded *c.*17 V- series documents.

There are *c.*120 ideographic/logographic signs that stand for commodities or objects, animate or inanimate. Phonetic signs can also be used individually or monogrammatically as logographic abbreviations: e.g. NI 'figs', SA 'flax', WE 'yearling', ME + RI 'honey', TU + RO₂ 'cheese'. The ideograms stand removed from, most frequently at the end of, lexical entries, where they are almost without exception followed by numerical signs or metrical *and* numerical signs designating quantity and amount. The ideograms can, as it were, refer back to word-units in a lexical entry that gloss or qualify the ideogram, e.g. *e-ra₃*-*two* and OLE 'oil', *e-re-ta* and VIR 'man', *ti-ri-po* and *201*[VAS]. This feature is purely and simply a bookkeeping/accounting convenience or habit.

(a)

1:4

a-re-zo-me-ne wa-to, re-u-ko-jo[

1:10

(b)

1:4

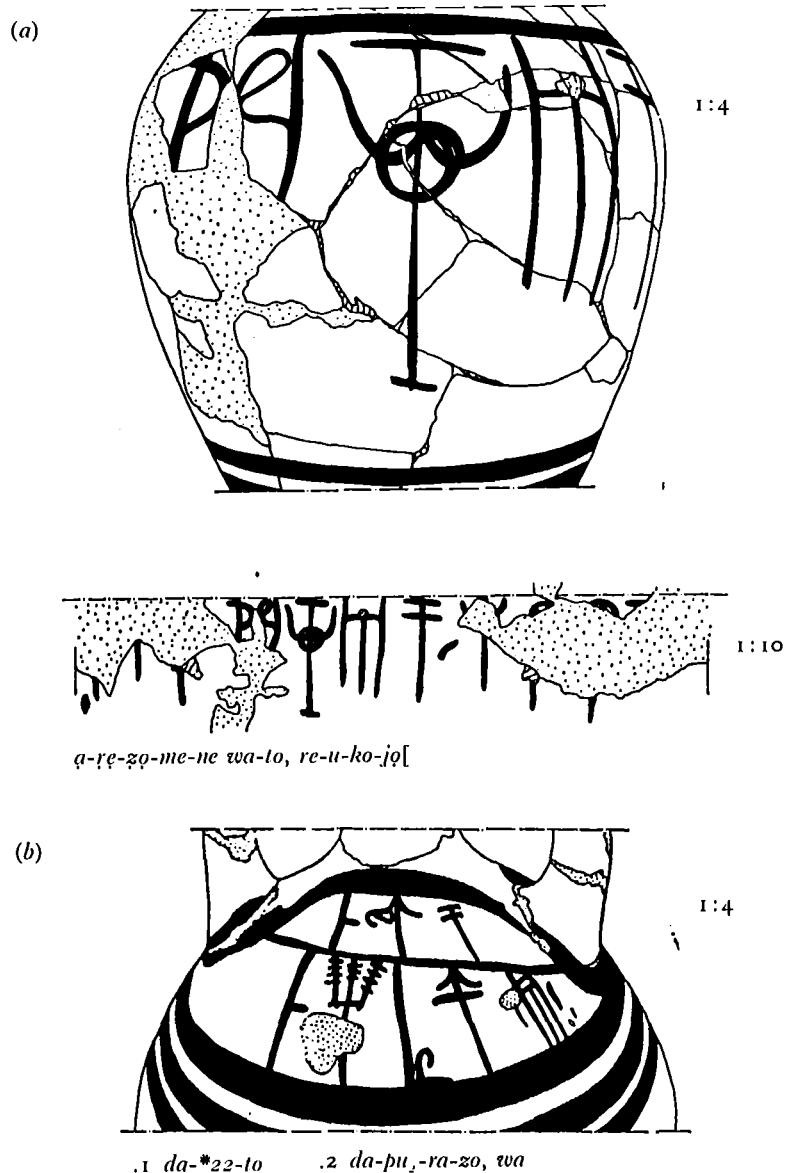.1 da-*22-to   .2 da-pu₂-ra-zo, wa

FIG. 8.8. Drawings of painted texts of inscribed
stirrup jars: (a) TH Z 851 from Thebes, and
(b) EL Z 1 from Eleusis (Sacconi 1974: 113)

Linear B also seems economic in purpose: the painted inscriptions
on transport stirrup jars (Figure 8.8) (Sacconi 1974; Hallager 1987),
the formulae and style of which Van Alfen (1996–7 [1998]) has in-
terpreted as serving the same kinds of administrative functions as
certain of the inscribed sealings and 'collector' livestock texts.[24]
The restriction of writing, as so far attested, virtually exclusively
to economic topics and the severe chronological limitations on the
validity or utility of information in the documents (cf. n. 26) are
two key factors in raising the question of whether and in what
sense we should call any particular spatially identifiable collection
of Linear B tablets 'archives'. The largest and most elaborate such
collection in any one location is the AC at Pylos. Neither it nor
any other collection of Linear B documents satisfies a definition
of 'archives' which stresses the historical value of stored records
and the process of intentional transference of records from the con-
texts in which their information was originally valid to a different
environment for long-term preservation.[25]

The length of time during which the information in collected
records was intended to remain useful for reference is a crucial
factor in defining ancient 'archives' and in interpreting the Py-
los AC. Records in the AC probably cover between two and five
months of selected economic activities within a given administra-
tive period (Palaima 1995).[26] Fissore (1994: 345) stresses that for

[24] In so doing, Van Alfen argues that the inscriptions did not serve as 'trademark'
labels for the contents of the stirrup jars and that even the nearly 'illegible' inscrip-
tions which seem to have been produced by illiterate pot painters were intentional
and meant to convey important information relating to the economic production
process. There are a select few painted inscriptions on fragments of other types of
vase, e.g. TI Z 28 and KN Z 1715 (both decorated cups).

[25] i.e. 'archives' defined as 'non-current records that, because of their long-range
value, have been transferred to an ad hoc agency' (Posner 1972: 4). Such a definition
can be applied to the Mycenaean documents only if one severely limits the defini-
tions of 'non-current' and 'long-range' to include texts whose information has been
recorded for several days to several months. Cf. Fissore (1994) on the problem of
using modern theoretical conceptions of 'archives' to identify and analyse ancient
'archives' and their functions, and the review article of Driessen (1994–5) on the
pre-writing and literate stages of development of archival procedures (using tokens,
sealings, and written texts) in the Middle and Near East and Aegean from the 7th
to the 2nd millennium BC.

[26] Estimated on the basis of the number of possible month or festival names
recognizable on the tablets, the absence of any official temporal designations by ref-
erence to individual holders of office or position (e.g. magistrates or other officials,
including rulers), references to 'last year' (PY Ma 126, Ma 193, Ma 216, Ma 378,
Ma 397, Ub 1316, 1317; cf. KN So 4442, Dp 7742; MY Oe 111, Ue 652), 'this
year' (PY Aq 64, Ma 225; cf. KN Fh 5451, Gg 5637+8243, and perhaps abbrevi-

the very concept of 'archives' to be 'used profitably for the ancient era' one must emphasize its functional meaning as a 'preset system of rationalized conservation according to rules which permit the later use of documents for [an] administration's internal needs, but not necessarily with a view to permanent conservation' and also keep in mind that some ancient archival practices are directed mainly at 'the problem of administrative control, with its specific requirements and regular rhythms of use and discard'.[27] This kind of definition of 'archives' makes the term more applicable to the Pylos AC by stressing the following features: 'pre-set' planning as opposed to *ad hoc* responses; 'system' as opposed to *ad hoc* arrangement; 'rationalized' and 'rules', which re-emphasize the intentionality and standardized (i.e. commonly agreed and therefore commonly understood and useful) organization in the first two features; 'internal administrative needs' and 'administrative control', which de-emphasize the tendency to have the term 'archives' pertain only to written documents of a 'higher order', e.g. historical, literary, religious, legal, and diplomatic texts; and 'rhythms of use and discard', which acknowledges that economic documents, both literate and pre-literate, often have a short-term utility according to standard and predetermined administrative cycles, e.g. the concept of the 'fiscal year' or 'quarterly earnings reports'.

Driessen (1994–5) undertakes a critique of Fissore (1994) and attempts to define 'archives' from an Aegeanist perspective, using the AC and the RCT as primary assemblages of Linear B data. Reasonably positing a stage where information from the clay-tablet records collected and stored in the Pylos AC would be transferred onto perishable materials for longer-term preservation and reference, Driessen coins the term 'pre-archives' for Mycenaean archives such as the AC: 'chronologically limited and transitional central depositories with an interrelated series of current records which were meant to be reviewed and selected before copying onto perishable material and disposal of the clay records' (Driessen 1994–5: 244).

ated as *za* on the KN Do records of sheep flocks), 'next year' (PY Ma 365), and 'yearly' (PY Es 644), and references to agricultural and other activities that give a seasonal fix.

[27] Fissore (1994), 344, observes that by applying certain modern criteria of centralized 'historical archives' to ancient collections of records, we would eliminate from study all but 'central, royal or state archives'.

Bennet takes up an opposite position, arguing that there is 'no compelling need for a further stage of documentation on a perishable medium such as papyrus or parchment' and certainly no level of economic planning 'in addition to the "one-year window" attested on clay' (Bennet 2001: 27).

The arguments for another stage of information processing and storage beyond the clay-tablet stage in the AC are reasonable and based on an understanding of formal aspects of Linear B script and document typology, and on administrative considerations. We should acknowledge, however, that they are *argumenta ex silentio* and that Bennet's counter-arguments have considerable merit. The written forms of the characters of the script are cursive and complex, and as such better suited to writing with pen or brush and ink or paint, as in the stirrup-jar inscriptions. These elaborate forms are retained over time without the kind of simplification that would have made writing on clay easier (contrast the development of cuneiform or even the post-archaic classes of Cypro-Minoan script). One way of explaining such conservatism is to posit the existence of 'pen or brush' writing on ephemeral documents of a 'higher order' (economic or otherwise), to which writing on clay would then have conformed and which would have exerted a constant conservative 'cursive' influence on the styles of writing that scribes used when they wrote on clay. We do have evidence for the use of parchment documents in association with Minoan flat-based nodules (Hallager 1997: i. 135–58; Weingarten 1983).[28] Although this sealing type disappears in the Mycenaean period, this has to do with changes in prevailing transactional and administrative systems and not, one would think, with the total elimination of 'pen or brush' writing.

The administrative argument posits the need to store, in a spatially economical way and for a longer time than the current administrative period, the detailed information on summary tablets (e.g. the Pylos En and Ep land series) and the administratively vital information pertaining to such topics as yearly regional taxation (e.g. the Pylos Ma and Na series), inventories or lists of precious vessels and furniture (PY Ta series, KN K[1] 740 and K[1] 872), offerings to deities (PY Fr series, KN Fp and Gg series), and what one imagines is much more comparable *contem-*

[28] Pini (1997), 55 and n. 5, calls these 'Päkchenplomben'; 708 of these 'document sealings' are known from nine Minoan sites on Crete.

porary information unattested in the records found in the AC at the time of its destruction. In substance, then, Driessen's view of the AC differs from my own not in how he thinks it functioned within the overall administrative bureaucracy of the palatial complex, but in the coining of a new term to differentiate the record assemblage of the AC from non-extant higher-order records.

Given the paucity of chronological references in the extant documents—the phrases 'last year', 'this year', and 'next year' are found on fewer than 20 of the *c*.5,500 clay records now published (above, n. 26)[29]—and the total absence of any entries on the clay tablets to differentiate between records of one administrative period and another, we assume that all records in a given assemblage come from the period under way at the time of the destruction which preserved the texts. This applies even to the clearest case, where data from single-transaction preliminary records are compiled into longer summary records, information in them being revised in the process (PY Eb, Eo, En, and Ep series). In the unlikely case that any of the records in the AC come from a prior administrative period, they must have been identified as such by some non-surviving form of labelling, e.g. with 'pen or brush' inscriptions, or by filing in specific locations or in other ways, e.g. special types of containers, that so far have escaped us.

My own definition of the AC as a system-dominant place for the administrative use of writing at the palatial centre of Pylos stresses its distinctive features in contrast with collections of tablets found elsewhere, mainly in work and storage areas (for which the standard term in Mycenaean pinacology is 'deposits').[30] The differences between the AC and deposits of Linear B tablets found in other locations include: the physical types of tablets, the length

[29] This approximate figure includes the many new fragments from Knossos studied over the last fifteen years and new discoveries of tablets and inscribed sealings at Khania, Midea, Pylos, Tiryns, and Thebes since Bartonek (1983). The most important recent discovery is of 238 documents, many very fragmentary, at Thebes in 1993–5. These are now published, with idiosyncratic interpretations, in Aravantinos, Godart, and Sacconi (2001). For interpretative problems see Palaima (forthcoming *b* and *c*).

[30] For the following discussion cf. Palaima (1988*a*), 171–89, and Palaima and Wright (1985), 257–8, tables 1–2. 'Deposits' are defined as: 'tablets, especially separate small groups of tablets like those in Rooms 23, 38 and 99 [at Pylos], that are associated with work done or materials stored where the tablets were found'.

and make-up of sets and 'dossiers', the kinds of information on the tablets, their manner of storage, and the general purposes served by the tablet information. The AC is characterized by all the following features: (1) records dealing with a variety of subjects; (2) coherent sets of records and 'dossiers' of sets; (3) longer sets of records, such as summaries, compilations, and final recensions, that are of more than temporary importance; (4) records written by a considerable number of different scribes; (5) evidence of scribal interaction and patent hierarchical ranking of scribes; (6) evidence of systematic arrangement and filing. It is fair to say that the records in the AC give it the appearance of being a comprehensive or 'global' economic-administrative office. There are no aspects of the economy covered by the 200 records found in 'deposits' elsewhere in the palatial complex that are not represented directly or indirectly in the written information housed in the AC at the moment of its destruction.

The central location of the AC in the architectural layout of the palatial centre (cf. Figure 8.1), especially during its final stage of occupation, when architectural modifications made its position even more prominent, is an additional 'archival' feature. Note also that in the Pylos texts time references to the year in progress, the year past, and the upcoming year are confined to records from the AC (tablets of series Ma, Aq, and Es) and to room 99 of the North-east Workshop (tablets Ub 1316 and 1317). This marks out the collections of records in these two locations as different from the strict 'deposits' of tablets found in areas such as the oil storeroom (room 23) and the vase storage area (room 20).[31] These latter have a 'contemporary' focus on immediate work in hand: various distributions of oil from the stores and keeping track of vases.

I have used the word 'scribes' to refer to the writers of the extant Linear B clay records. This term obviously means different things in different cultural contexts. A fuller understanding of its meaning in a Mycenaean setting is important for understanding the nature of the AC. There is no known Mycenaean word for 'scribe'. None of the texts is signed by the scribe or official who wrote it.[32] None of the tablets bears a seal impression

[31] Cf. Shelmerdine (1987) for a treatment of texts and activities in the North-east Workshop.

[32] Some few tablets, e.g. PY An 261 and Cn 655 (Palaima 1988*a*: 51–8), contain

or other mark to identify authorship or administrative responsibility. Inscribed nodules bear seal impressions, but it is unclear whether the seal identifies the writer of the brief written texts on the facets of the sealing. In fact, we do not know whom or what authority in the economic transactions within which sealings were used the seal impression identifies. Moreover, the proportion of inscribed to uninscribed sealings at Knossos and Pylos is relatively small: only 22 out of 164 sealings at Pylos bear inscriptions, and the proportion is even smaller for the AC: 1 out of 18 (Palaima 1987*b*; Pini 1997). Thus it is clear that sealings primarily maintained their original function (as in the Minoan period)[33] as recording instruments within transactions that did not *require* the use of writing (Palaima 2001). We can at least tentatively propose the converse: non-scribes impressed seals on some of the sealings (Palaima 1987*b*; Palaima 1994*b*). The writers of Linear B documents remain as anonymous now as they were forty years ago when the seminal article by Bennett appeared (Bennett 1960).

The tablet-writers are identifiable by their writing styles and habits. Mycenologists generally use the term 'scribal hand' to make it clear that the 'scribes' have been identified by such means. Given the complexity of sign-shapes, the large phonetic and ideographic/logographic repertories of signs, and the relative freedom which the tablet-writers had in producing any given tablet,[34] it has been possible to identify individual 'scribes' and to develop categories of certainty with regard to their identification (Bennett 1947; Olivier 1967; Palaima 1988*a*: 18–33; Driessen 1988; 2000; Sjöquist and Åström 1985; 1991; Aravantinos, Godart, and Sacconi 2001). At Pylos we have 25 identifiable hands and another 7 or so secondary or probable hands from the destruction phase of administration; at

substantial work by two different 'scribes'. Others contain the intervention of a second scribe to correct or add information, e.g. KH Ar 4 (Palaima 1992–3).

[33] For the Minoan Linear A period, the sealing material from Hagia Triada and Kato Zakro proves that sealing administration and written administration were more complementary than integrated with one another (Palaima 1994*b*).

[34] The particular form of a tablet, the layout and formulae used for information entry upon it, and even spellings of words were in large measure left to, and therefore diagnostic of, the individual tablet-writers. Cf. Sjöquist and Åström (1985; 1991) and the contributions by Palaima and Olivier to these respective volumes for the identification of tablet-manufacturers by palm-print analysis and how they possibly relate to the tablet-writers. Cf. also Palaima (1990–1).

Knossos we have *c*.50 certain hands and 27 secondary hands from all periods (Olivier 1967; Driessen 1988; 2000).[35]

Figuring out the status of Mycenaean 'scribes' is more difficult. Olivier (1967), 135–6, is certainly correct in calling them administrative 'fonctionnaires', but the question of whether their status was intimately connected with their ability to write or whether their ability to write was acquired because of their prominence as palatial or provincial administrators or as members of military, economic, or social élites still remains open. Olivier (1967), 135, viewed the individual hands as functionaries who in the course of their activities as administrative officials, 'perhaps at an elevated level', acquired the art of writing. Driessen (1992), 198–200, has analysed the different categories of élites in the Linear B documents as defined either explicitly by 'nomenclature'[36] or by their clearly elevated status—militarily, religiously, politically, or economically—within the Linear B records. In defining 'administrative' élite, he argues further that this category would be the least exclusive and that in fact we could expect some crossover into other categories: that is, that it would be reasonable to expect that a tablet-writer might also

[35] Olivier (1967), 102, reckons that 100 is a reasonable estimate of the total number of scribes at Knossos. The Knossian administration was organized according to a system of departments and bureaux (essentially interrelated departments) within each of which the writing styles of 'scribes' are so similar to each other that it is reasonable to conclude that individuals learnt to write within the tradition and style of a particular department or bureau. The best example of this is the RCT, where *c*.10 major and 3 secondary hands wrote *c*.648 tablets (Driessen 1988). However, their styles are so close to one another that Olivier (1967) designated them all as Scribe 124 and distinguished them one from the other by the addition of a small letter. Driessen (1988; 2000) now brings a sophisticated array of evidence and methods to bear on the material and proposes more certain identifications. The situation is further complicated at Knossos by the much greater brevity of most tablets, which therefore offer less evidence, individually and even in sets, for identification of hands. Although the same system of departmental organization is not found at Pylos, the scribal hands identifiable in tablets from the destruction phase at Pylos can be assigned to three general classes of writing style each represented by a scribe (Hand 1, Hand 21, and Hand 41 respectively) who is prominent with regard to the kinds of texts he writes, the importance of the subjects he records, and his relationship to other scribes. Cf. Palaima (1988*a*).

[36] i.e. if an individual is explicitly referred to by such titles as *ra-wa-ke-ta* 'military leader', or *i-je-re-u* 'priest', or *e-qe-ta* 'follower', or *qa-si-re-u* 'chief', or *ko-re-te* 'district official'. The most conspicuous élite class of individuals identifiable prosopographically by the contexts of their occurrence in the tablets is the so-called 'collectors' (Bennet 1992). These individuals (27 at Knossos and 4 at Pylos) are nowhere identified by title, but by their appearance within texts pertaining to the cloth production industry, as 'controllers' of herds of sheep and as 'owners' of collectives of women cloth workers.

be a member of one of the other élites. Thus he suggests that the 'scribe' at Knossos who recorded information about flocks of sheep in central Crete was also the administrative functionary in charge of this important aspect of Knossian economy.[37] Bennet (2001), 31–5, argues further that Mycenaean ' "scribes" belong among the performers of the administration, not the "back-stage" staff' and that 'we should collapse the categories "scribes" and "members of the 'élite'" ', thereby linking the activities of scribes to overall strategies of the maintenance and representation of power within the polity'.

I do not doubt that it is possible that some of our 'scribes' have a high economic, political, religious, social, or administrative status (apart from their function as 'tablet-writers' *per se*).[38] However, Driessen's suggestion about 'scribe' and 'administrative functionary' and Bennet's equation of tablet-writers with 'members of the élite' are not without problems. They are problematical for Pylos, where a number of major scribes write records about widely diverse economic subjects with no clear pattern of specialization by geographic area or economic sphere. Conversely, several 'scribes' work on different aspects of the same economic subject without necessarily implying that they were responsible for the economic management of the aspects they record. Hand 2 wrote records of bronze allotments to smiths in groups (Jn series along with Hand 21) (Smith 1992–3) and a record of 'recycling' or 'transference' of bronze from religious sanctuaries into the palatial sphere for weapons manufacture (Jn 829) (Palaima 2001). He also wrote the major extant regional taxation records (series Ma), records of allotments of oil to sanctuaries and deities (series Fr), a record of oil transfer between unguent-boilers (Fr 1184), a record of the distribution of barley and figs to sanctuaries (Fn 187), and an inspection inventory of furniture, vases, and implements that was connected with a commensal banqueting ceremony (Ta series). It is difficult to see here any unifying thread that would define the role of this 'scribe' within a single 'office' of economic administration.

It is possible that the individual known as Hand 2 was in charge

[37] Textile production from wool was *the* major Cretan palatial industry. The Knossos Da–Dg records monitored *c.*100,000 sheep (Killen 1985: 250–1).

[38] Spelling idiosyncrasies and other linguistic peculiarities of Mycenaean 'scribes' have been explained by their belonging to and operating within high-ranking and exclusive social groups. Cf. Palaima (2002).

of managing such diverse economic spheres during the 2–5 months for which his activities are documented. But we have to remember that our documentation is partial and the actual range of responsibilities of Hand 2 and other comparable 'scribal hands' throughout an entire administrative cycle would have been even greater. It is to my mind more likely (*contra* Bennet 2001) that Hand 2 was a highly trained and competent 'tablet-writer', or, if you will, 'accountant' or 'information manager', who in some cases accompanied the parties responsible for various aspects of the economy and in other cases compiled on page-shaped documents information reported to him in oral or written form that had to be centrally processed.[39]

The AC consists of two rooms (Figures 8.1, 8.2) located at the main entrance (during the late LH IIIB phase) to the central palatial building and ideally situated along routes of movement to other key areas of the palatial complex (the South-west Building and the North-east Workshop). Its location and arrangement make it accessible for the internal and external flow of information. The room with internal access (room 8) seems to have been devoted primarily to clay-tablet filing, storage, and referencing. The room with external access (room 7) seems to have been the main *locus* for the receipt of incoming tablets and information and for temporary storage of texts during the initial stages of information-processing (Palaima and Wright 1985; Palaima 1995; 1996*b*; Pluta 1996–7 [1998]). The rooms are fairly small. Room 7 has usable interior space of about 4 m. by 4 m., some of which was taken up by a large *pithos* (clay storage vessel) in the southern corner of the room and by conjectured shelving along the north-east and south-east walls. Room 8, where most tablets were stored, is even smaller: *c.*4 m. by less than 3 m., with two areas in the line of doorway traffic flow and with *c.*3.5 m.² taken up by a low clay bench along the three interior walls. The tablets were found distributed

[39] Palaima (2000*b*) summarizes the textual history of the PY Ta series as part of ongoing research. I think that it is most probable that certain features of the Ta texts derive from a process of visual inspection and dictation. That is, the Ta series, the heading of which declares that a person named *pu₂-ke-qi-ri* examined the items inventoried, was not written by *pu₂-ke-qi-ri*, but by a 'scribe' assigned to or receiving information ultimately derived from him. I think the evidence favours the former. If true, this would at least indicate that neither Driessen's nor Bennet's suggestion can be universally applied: 'scribe' and 'élite administrator in charge' were in some cases different persons.

on the floors of these two rooms and some on the bench in room 8 (Figure 8.9).

The basis for an even better understanding of how this complex functioned as a centre for tablet collection, storage, and processing is being provided now by Pluta (1996–7 [1998]), who is working systematically on clarifying and mapping tablet findspots and material remains in order to trace the original storage locations and physical arrangement of the two rooms. Figure 8.9 shows the distribution of tablets in the AC.[40] The great majority are found, often in coherent sets, in room 8. Seven labels (small flat pieces of clay finger-pressed onto wickerwork baskets and bearing very brief summaries that identify the contents of tablets in the baskets) are found in room 8.[41] The majority (twelve) come from room 7. Nine of these come from grid location *5214*, either with the series to which they belong (e.g. series Sh, dealing with refurbishment of body armour: Palaima 1996*b*) or without it.[42] This makes it possible to see that a standard practice was to deliver tablets or sets of tablets in wicker baskets to room 7, where they were temporarily stored in grid *52* until their contents were checked and it was determined how the information in them had to be processed and whether and where this information was to be stored. It now seems that there was room for storage shelving along the north-east wall (grids *55–65*)

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[40] The grid plans in Figs. 8.2 and 8.9 designate each 1-m.-square grid-square in the AC by *italicized* co-ordinate numbers from *00* to *99*. Within each individual grid-square a grid of like orientation composed of 1-cm.-square grid-squares is imagined and its co-ordinate numbers are given as immediately following non-italicized numbers. Thus reference is made to a specific tablet findspot by a four-digit string of *italicized* and non-italicized numbers designating the real grid-square and the imagined grid-square inserted into it. For example, grid *52* in room 7 shows an isolated cluster of clay labels and leaf-shaped tablets recording armour located south (immediately left) of the doorway between rooms 7 and 8. The labels are all in grid *5214*, i.e. the single dot in grid *52* in Fig. 8.9 closest to the cross-wall separating rooms 7 and 8.

[41] Wa 114 *1335*; Wa 362 *2345 3441*; Wa 401 *2382*; Wa 1093 *3462*; Wa 1008 *1321*; Wa 1148 and 1248 are generally assigned to room 8. Wa 114 in Fig. 8.5 is a typical label text giving the following information: 'monthly (rations)' WOMEN 'further province'. Wa 1008 also refers to the same subject and was found in the same area with the individual tablets of the series giving the appropriate information for these women workers: 'WOMEN thus grain-(. . .)'.

[42] The text of Wa 731 reads 'contributions | to the sheep-flayers' and the important commensal banqueting document Un 718 (found in grid *83*) records such 'contributions to the sheep-flayers' coming from the *ra-wa-ke-ta* (the military leader), the *da-mo* (the collective local 'people'), another social group known as the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma*, and an individual who might be the *wanaks* or 'king' of Pylos. Cf. Palaima (2002).
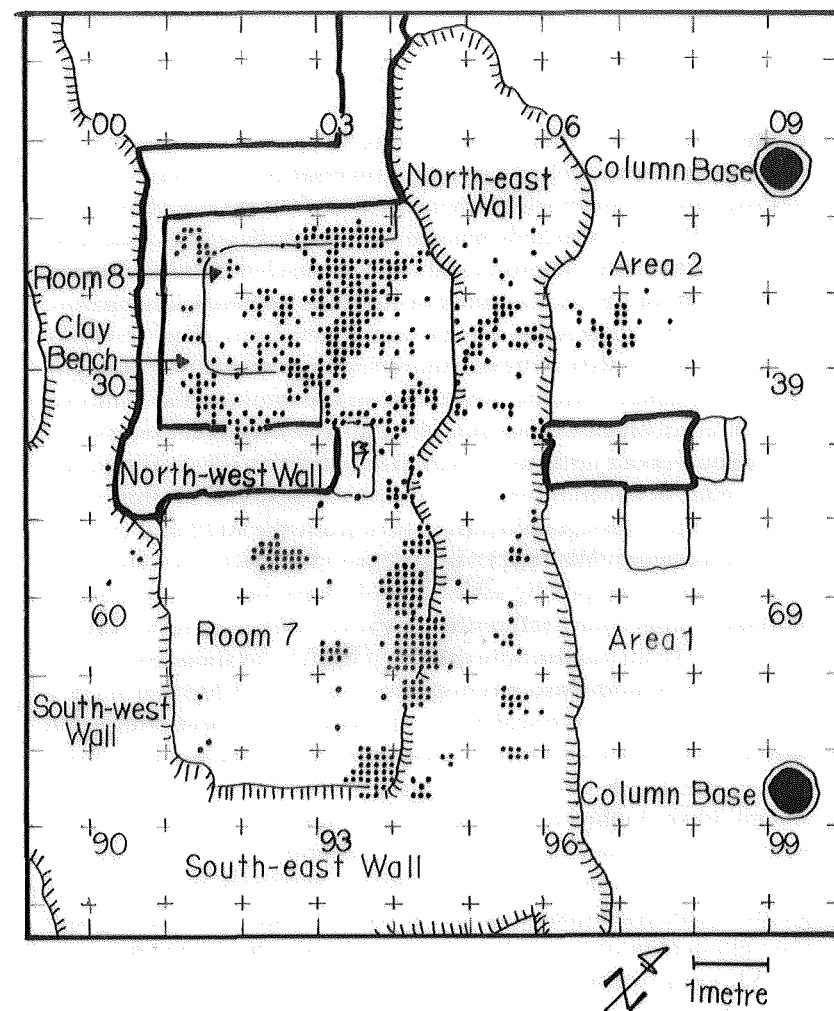

FIG. 8.9. Distribution of tablets in the Archives Complex at Pylos (Pluta 1996–7 [1998]: 239, fig. 7); cf. Figs. 8.1 and 8.2

and perhaps even the south-east wall (grid *83*) of room 7. Tablets could have been temporarily stored on these shelves while 'in process'. Tablets found in grid *83* offer the best example (as explained in Palaima 1995) of texts which had just arrived in the AC. In this location, set off from the rest of the inscribed documents in the AC, were the 'prospective' record of commensal banqueting offerings to Poseidon by the chief components of Pylian society (Un 718)[43] and the Ta tablets, which inventory the numbers and condition of vessels, fire implements, and furniture needed on a ceremonial occasion. Room 7 also contains in its south corner a large *pithos*, perhaps for holding water, which would have been of use in working with clay records. Note in Figure 8.9 the general absence of any tablet fragments from the 'work area' in the south part of room 7.

The recent analysis of sealings by Pini and his collaborators further improves our understanding of the general process of handling and storage of tablet information in the AC: 15 out of 16 (Pini 1997: 110) sealings of assignable provenance from the AC[44] and the one inscribed sealing (Wr 1457)[45] in this group come from room 8, in which tablets grouped by series seem to have been systematically stored for longer-term reference. The text of Wr 1457 (OX-HIDE/'payment') relates to the information of the Ma taxation set (Olivier 1997: 71–2) found clustered in grids *13* and *23*.[46] Furthermore, a large percentage of the sealings here seem to have been impressed with rings of precious metal, a phenomenon seen elsewhere at Pylos only in the North-east Workshop, particularly rooms 98–9, which shares other 'higher-order' features of information management with the AC. In more commonplace work and storage areas (rooms 24, 95, and 105) less precious soft- and hard-stone lentoids are used almost exclusively. The sealings in room 8 (and rooms 98–9) and the high quality of the seal rings used to make them suggest either that they were connected with the sealing of containers for tablets or

that they were somehow themselves primary data for the economic activities recorded in the tablets. Along with the sealings, seven bronze hinges or handles were found in room 8. The most conspicuous were found on the bench in the southernmost corner of the room (Blegen and Rawson 1966: 1. 98), along with a singular clay 'label' (Wa 569 in Melena 1996–7 [1998]: 161), the back of which was impressed on a smooth surface such as the wooden side of a container. These finds give us some evidence for what must have been systematic storage arrangements for sets of tablets in room 8.

Approximately 767 tablets (excluding those of the fragmentary Xa and Xn series) come from the AC in comparison with *c.*200 such tablets from other locations. The difference in information hierarchy and function between the AC and these other areas and the system dominance of the AC are made clear by the following statistics. Of 111 tablets that contain 50 or more ideographic or syllabic signs, 109 come from the AC.[47] These come from series dealing with personnel, livestock management, land tenure, the distribution of foodstuffs to specialist workers and communities, flax production and 'taxation', leather hides (?), furniture, vessels, ritual offerings to deities, and preparations for commensal banquets. Only two tablets of such length (An 1281 and Cn 1287) come from outside the AC, but significantly again from room 99 in the Northeast Workshop. An 1281 is a list of single and paired human beings, some with religious associations. Cn 1287 lists she-goats singly, with one exceptional pair, against 10 individuals recorded by name. Six of these individuals are further designated by function ('fuller', 'potter', and 'servant of the deity *di-u-ja*' among them). Neither An 1281 nor Cn 1287 is a higher-order economic document of the kind we find in the AC, e.g. the Ma documents on regional taxation, the meticulous land-tenure documents of the E series (both preliminary leaf-shaped tablets and page-shaped updated compilations therefrom), the Cn page-shaped lists of flocks under the direction of specified 'collectors', or the page-shaped lists of military and rower personnel. The tablets from the single site-wide destruction stratum then provide us with a frozen image of administrative activity over a longer period. But we can reconstruct the flow of

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[43] Tablet Un 718 is 'prospective' in the sense that its text declares that an individual who is probably the *wanaks* or 'king' of Pylos 'will give' a contribution and likewise that the 'military leader' or *ra-wa-ke-ta* 'will give'.

[44] Three sealings are ascribed generally to rooms 7–8.

[45] Unfortunately without a known findspot, so it cannot be assigned to a grid location in order to see how it relates to those tablet series which share information with it.

[46] Tablets of the Ma set record taxation figures of six commodities or products assessed in fixed proportion (and paid, exempted, or still due) from the major districts into which the two provinces of the territory of Pylos were divided; *152* (known to be ox-hide from its phonetic ligature) is one of these six commodities.

[47] Contrast this high percentage of full page-shaped texts in the AC at Pylos with the RCT at Knossos, where only 11 of 648 tablets are page-shaped and about a third of all tablets contain a single brief syllabic entry, usually a man's name. See Driessen (2000), 43, 195.

information, the interrelationship of series of texts, the interaction of scribes, the movement of tablets, and the process of economic administration in storerooms, in work areas, and in the AC, where we get a clear view of record-processing and filing activities.

Mycenaean scribes are 'anonymous', but it is also true that the 'scribes' do not refer within their texts to administrative offices (as opposed to individual *officials*), departments, or other elements of administrative organization. Mycenologists rely on the attributions of records to scribal hands and knowledge of the find contexts of the tablets to understand the structure of the administrative information system. Thus we do not define texts relating to the same general economic subject as belonging to the same 'office', unless the tablets or sets are clearly unified.

A small number of tablets and sealings at Pylos refer to the manufacture of spears and javelins and the delivery of raw pieces of wood that would eventually be worked into spear shafts or chariot axles. By studying these tablets as an ensemble according to find locations and the transactional levels at which their information was used, we can see economic and work activities in process and trace the interests of different administrative units.[48]

On the primary level are sealings or 'nodules' relating to the handling of materials. These come from the North-east Workshop (Figure 8.1, rooms 92–100). On a slightly higher level are leaf-shaped tablets recording the quantities of a few different items without any additional information. Higher still are fuller tablets relating to the assignments of personnel or to larger quantities of items. All these texts come from the workshop area, where supervision of the delivery, collection, and distribution of raw materials, management of work and the workforce, and monitoring of finished products took place. At the highest administrative level is a single text from the AC which records the 'contribution' of bulk shipments of two categories of raw wood from 'woodcutters' and a specific territorial organization.

[48] New data and joins in Shelmerdine and Bennet (1995) and Melena (1996–7 [1998]), 165–7. I present translations of the tablets here. This will introduce some ambiguity since it involves reasoned choice among proposed interpretations and on occasion judicious textual restoration. Italicization within transcriptions indicates that a reading is incomplete or not clearly preserved. Question marks indicate that a reading is particularly vexed. Bold letters **X** and **Y** (thus) on Vn 1339 represent partial or unclear—but different—word-units.

Sealings[49] (*North-east Workshop*)

PY Wr 1480	1.	'pertaining to the *wanaks*'
	2.	of javelins
	3.	shafts

| PY Wr 1328 | 1. | *seal impression* (CMS 1, no. 318) |
| (room 98) | .2–.3 | shafts for infantry spears[50] |

PY Wr 1329	.1	*sigillum* (CMS 1, no. 317)
(room 98)	.2	20
	.3	*uninscribed*

Leaf-shaped tablets (*North-east Workshop*)

| PY Va 1323 | .1 | 'axle-sized pieces of wood' of inferior quality 32 |
| (room 99) | | |

| PY Va 1324 | .1 | shafts for spears 30 |
| (room 99) | .2 | shafts for infantry spears[51] 20; 'axle-sized pieces of wood' 2 |

Page-shaped tablets (*North-east Workshop*)

PY An 1282	.1	for chariots MEN 18; for wheels MEN 18
(room 99)	.2	for flint points MEN 13; for halters MEN 5
	.3	for shafts[52] MEN 36

PY Vn 1339	.1	shafts for spears 32; **X** 127
(room 99)	.2	*'(twigs) for wickerwork'*? **Y** 6
	.3	axle-sized pieces of wood[53] 8
	.4	? 6

| PY Vn 1341 | .1–.2 | *text damaged and lexical items obscure* |
| (room 99) | .3 | the deity *potnia*[54] |

[49] For the sealings the 'line' numbers refer to the three facets formed by impressing a seal upon a lump of clay while holding it in one's hands or fingers. The CMS numbers identify specific seals.

[50] The two facets are not clearly delimited; the text is arranged as if they were a single surface.

[51] The 'scribes' seem to have differentiated different styles of a basic weapon type. Cf. Jn 829: *pa-ta-jo-i* (referring to a hurling spear or 'javelin') and *e-ke-si* (referring to a thrusting spear). The shafts for a thrusting spear *e-ke-i-ja* probably required stouter pieces of raw wood than the shafts for javelins. Since the adjectival forms on Va 1324 distinguish between shafts for 'thrusting spears' and shafts for 'infantry spears', it is impossible for us to decide whether the latter are some special modified kind of 'thrusting spears' for infantry or spears that would be categorized as 'javelins'. I have therefore translated as 'spear' throughout.

[52] Of spears.   [53] Or perhaps 'axles' *per se*.

[54] The association of *potnia* with the North-east Workshop is confirmed in other tablets such as An 1281.

.4   '(twigs) for wickerwork for targets'[55]
.5   *text damaged*
.6   '(twigs) for wickerwork for ?' 5
.7   '**X** of javelins' 200
.8   *left part of text missing and right part uninscribed*

Page-shaped tablet (*AC*)

PY Vn 10   .1   thus contribute the woodcutters
(room 8)   .2   to the wheel-assembly workshop 'saplings' 50
    .3   and 'axle-sized pieces of wood' 50
    .4   and so many the territorial organization of *Lousos*[56]
       'axle-sized pieces of wood'
    .5   100 and so many 'saplings' 100

Notice how minimalistic the texts from the North-east Workshop are in comparison with the fuller text from the central archives and the different levels of interest reflected in them. Vn 10 (Palaima 1980) makes transactional details—and here details that could have been registered on sealings: 'thus they are giving' (*o-di-do-si*) and 'to the wheel-assembly workshop' (*a-mo-te-jo-na-de*)—explicit in a heading and/or first section and then lets them be understood and unexpressed subsequently. The text of Vn 10 has always been read with the subject of the first entry plural: 'thus the woodcutters give to the wheel-assembly workshop: "saplings" 50 and axle-sized pieces of wood 50'. The second entry reads: 'and so many the territorial organization of *Lousos* (gives): axle-sized pieces of wood 100 and so many "saplings" 100'. At some earlier stage individual woodcutters might have contributed their raw materials in transactions requiring sealings; likewise sealings might have been used by whatever parties contributed to the shipments from *Lousos*. These are of no concern to the central administration, which needs information about bulk shipments from two 'collective' sources to the 'wheel-assembly workshop', where the production and refurbishing of chariot wheels take place. It is clear from the archaeological remains and tablet finds that the 'wheel-assembly workshop' is the North-east Workshop (cf. the references to 'axles' or 'axle-sized pieces of wood' on Va 1323, Va 1324, and Vn 1339 and to chariots and wheels on An 1282).

The texts from the North-east Workshop contain little in the way of specific references to persons, collective groups, or institu-

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[55] Or '(twigs) for wickerwork for hurdles'. The quantity here is surprisingly unspecified.   [56] *Lousos* is a toponym.

tions which might be responsible for these materials,[57] nor do they record any obligations or transactions that might have been associated with gathering, working on, or disbursing these materials. Line .3 of Vn 1341 seems to connect the 'wickerwork material' of a surprisingly unspecified quantity in line .4 with the deity *potnia*. If we were able to read line .5 more securely, it might reveal, in the same formatting position as *potnia* on line .3, an individual or institution responsible for the materials recorded in lines .6–.7.

The laconic nature of the texts from the North-east Workshop can be explained in two ways. First, the texts are in the nature of shorthand notes or inventories of materials and workers that would be needed for planning aspects of work. Second, the texts reflect transactional processes for some of which sealings were used. These are understood here by the managers who use these tablets for reference in the workshop environment. They understand the context for the much-abridged information on these tablets.

Va 1323 and Va 1324 look very much like 'culling inventories', documents that record the results of an inspection process whereby the quality of individual pieces in a bulk delivery of the kind recorded in Vn 10 is judged and it is then determined what the raw pieces might best be suited for. The North-east Workshop, as text An 1282 makes clear, would have used thicker and thinner lengths of raw wood (generically specified as 'axles' or, in our translation, 'axle-sized pieces of wood') for chariot axles and also for spear and javelin handles. We might wonder whether it is a coincidence that the shafts for 'spears' and 'infantry spears' in Va 1324 add up to 50, as in the contribution of both 'saplings' and 'axle-sized pieces of wood' from the woodcutters on Vn 10. Also intriguing is the coincidence that our longer summary list Vn 1339 records 32 'shafts for spears', the same number as the 32 'axle-sized pieces of wood' of inferior quality on Va 1323 and the 30 'shafts for spears' and 2 'axle-sized pieces of wood' on Va 1324. We can imagine that either the 32 'axle-sized pieces of wood of inferior quality' on Va 1323 were found suitable for use as the shafts for spears recorded on Vn 1339 .1, or that the division of 50 'axle-sized pieces of wood' or 'saplings' was examined and culled at first into 30 future shafts for thrusting spears, 20 future shafts for 'spears for infantry', and 2 'axle-sized

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[57] An 1282 is a roster of groups of men assigned to work with chariots, horse halters, and spears. But they are not recorded with specific quantities of raw materials or finished products.

pieces of wood', but that later these last two pieces of raw material were also allocated for thrusting spears. We should note here that the same term (Myc. *a-ko-so-ne*) seems to have been used by convention at all stages of the production process in reference to the raw wood of a size suitable to be used for finished 'axles' and eventually the finished axles themselves. This creates problems for us as modern interpreters, but the tablet-writers involved with these procedures would have known by document type and by textual and administrative context what *a-ko-so-ne* meant in any particular record.

Wr 1480 seems to indicate that a single sealing accompanied a group of spear shafts in the North-east Workshop and that these somehow came under the control or sphere of the *wanaks*. The reference in Wr 1480 is to wooden shafts of a size that would have been used for javelins by affixing the kind of bronze point recorded in PY Jn 829 (and there specified as for 'javelins' and 'spears'). We may recall that Jn 829 from the AC records the collection of used 'temple' bronze from the 16 major locales of the two provinces of Pylos. Again, the AC monitors the big picture, while the document from the North-east Workshop records specific work.

Wr 1328 with its text 'shafts for infantry spears' is typical of most inscribed sealings. It contains no numerical entry and no information as to its sphere of concern or the particular nature of the transaction involved. The seal impression undoubtedly conveys necessary information about personal or official responsibility. However, we should note that Wr 1329 from the same room 98 gives only the number 20 (with a different seal countermark from that of 1328). This coincidence with the entry of 20 'shafts for infantry spears' in Va 1324 can hardly be without significance. We might then group Wr 1328 with Wr 1329 and read them as a unified text:

Wr 1328   'shafts for infantry spears'
Wr 1329   20

Two responsible parties would seem to have been involved. Each made a seal impression on a sealing. One sealing indicates by writing that this is a batch of raw material for the shafts of infantry spears; the second that they are, at some stage, 20 in number. The sealings, if not the materials with which they are associated, are eventually taken to room 98. In room 99 a scribe of a different class (class ii) from the scribe who wrote the text of Wr 1328 (class i) writes up the record Va 1324. The central administration in the

AC is concerned with none of this. It contains only a record (Vn 10) that verifies the general fulfilment of a delivery obligation by particular groups. Vn 10 makes explicit the collective/institutional sources and the destination of all the raw materials delivered. It would attest to the fulfilment of obligations by the 'woodcutters' and the territorial collective of *Lousos*. Such a text might also be useful in managing and planning the rate of general production work going on in the environs of the palatial centre.

'Scribes' in the North-east Workshop are meanwhile busy noting how the raw materials in such a delivery were used and integrating such activities into other work. This involves the use of both uninscribed and inscribed sealings accompanying deliveries. In addition, leaf-shaped and longer page-shaped texts are used to record shorthand information that would have been readily understood by those who were managing the work activities. An 1282 records the systematic assignment of men in groups of 18 and multiples thereof to different purposes.[58] As many (36) are assigned to work on spear shafts as to work on chariot assemblage (18) and chariot wheels (18) combined. But all the work implied in An 1282 can be traced to records like the delivery on Vn 10. Men are set to work at making shafts for spears (and spear points) as well as chariots and their wheels (and halters for their horses). The only related information that has yet reached, or ever reaches, the AC is the record of the major shipment of the vital raw materials from those responsible in the provincial territory which the palatial centre controlled. The AC also contains a full inventory (Sa series) of chariot wheels, their state of repair or disrepair, and the parties responsible for working on them. These tablets seem to have been transferred from the North-east Workshop (Palaima 1988a: 93). Other records (tablets Vn 46 and Vn 879) in the AC connected with raw-wood resources list wood pieces suitable for ship construction (Hocker and Palaima 1990–1), and Vn 865 registers 'shipbuilders'. But again the actual details of lower-level stages of production were of no concern to the AC at the time when the palatial centre was destroyed.

It is clear that the AC was concerned with higher levels of economic management and with subjects of concern to the palatial centre proper. It is also clear that tracking of the progress of raw materials from delivery through production went on in workshop

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[58] Note, as in Vn 10 and the Pylos Ma taxation records, the preference for round-figure or proportional quotas: cf. Killen (1985), 246–7 nn. 23–35.

contexts. Likewise the disbursement or receipt of commodities (oil, wine) from or by central stores was documented in leaf-shaped tablets and inscribed sealings from the appropriate storage rooms. Such texts are on-the-spot notations. If their information were to be conveyed to the AC, one imagines that such texts would be used as 'memory aids' for the administrator doing the reporting or that texts with fuller specific information (at least about responsible parties and the nature of obligations outstanding or already met) would have been written and conveyed.

The other alternative is for the AC to send out 'scribes' to do visual inspection of finished or stored materials. We have examples of this in the Sh and Ta series. In both cases the occasion and/or the nature of the work obligation and the responsible party or official are explicitly recorded in a way that is not common in tablets from 'deposits' at Pylos. The hierarchy of information then builds from workshop and storage documents through documents delivered to AC room 7 to documents systematically filed in room 8 to the posited non-extant records in pen or brush (if Driessen 1994–5 is right, and Bennet 2001 is wrong). This hierarchy can be traced in the kinds of information recorded in texts, the importance of the subjects treated, and even in document typology. It is no accident that sealings, which we may consider to be basic single-transaction records, are found in great numbers outside the AC. Their use in room 8 now bears further investigation. But I would not be surprised to discover that such sealings, made by costly metal rings, were used in connection with specific tablet series and attested to the authority and responsibility of the 'scribes' who wrote the texts. Nor is it an accident that nearly all of the longest page-shaped summaries and lists are found in the AC (with the exception of the higher-status 'deposit' in the North-east Workshop).

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9

Reflections on Neo-Assyrian Archives

FREDERICK MARIO FALES

The period of the later Assyrian empire, from the ninth to the seventh century BC, is at present one of the most thriving branches of ancient Near Eastern historical and philological research, owing to a variety of recent archaeological discoveries and to a collective effort at systematization of previously acquired textual data. In conformity with the 'return to the text' which characterizes historical methodology at the present time, it seems fitting to attempt a bird's-eye view of the written material from the Neo-Assyrian age, in search of elements of archival organization. The objective of this search will be to gain possible insights into the administrative *modus operandi* of the time, and into the conceptual issues which regulated textuality in its diffusion and duration.

It may be worth recalling at the outset that the discovery in the late 1840s by British (slightly anticipated by French) excavators of late Assyrian palatial complexes represented the very beginning of modern studies of ancient Mesopotamia and neighbouring cultures;[1] in the immediate wake of these discoveries the British Museum, together with other European collections, became the repository of a vast quantity of Assyrian antiquities, among which were several thousand randomly classified and cursorily described texts in cuneiform script, the overwhelming majority on clay tablets (cf. Reade 1986; Walker 1987). Such texts fell into three main groups: the royal inscriptions—written in the literary variety of Akkadian known as 'Standard Babylonian'—which related the *res gestae* of

Note. For bibliography see p. 226.

[1] On the history of Assyrian discoveries cf. most recently and exhaustively Larsen (1996).

the Assyrian rulers, usually in multiple copies; writings of liter-
ary, religious, and scientific interest, originating from the Sumero-
Akkadian stream of tradition going back up to 1,500 years, and
attested in often multiple Babylonian (as well as some Assyrian)
transcriptions; and documents of immediate use for the practical
affairs and overall policy of the Assyrian court, composed—rarely
in more than one exemplar—from the mid-eighth to the late seventh
century BC in the contemporary Assyrian written dialectal variety
('Neo-Assyrian').[2] Among the latter group, a not irrelevant—but
not particularly vast—number of texts also bore marginal notes or
independent inscriptions in the Aramaic language and alphabet.[3]
This intellectual, dialectal, and linguistic variety of the Assyrian
materials which emerged from the early excavations of the major
palace complexes has proved, in the course of the intervening 150
years, to be no exception: in other words, essentially the same as-
sortment of written materials has been brought to light in subse-
quent Assyrian excavations—of greater or smaller substance and
import—until the present day.

The following pages will necessarily focus on the problems of
archival classification of only one of the textual types named above,
namely the everyday or 'practical' documents of the later Assyrian
empire—leaving aside both the royal inscriptions and the literary
texts—building on the preliminary contextual foundation repre-
sented by the 'Neo-Assyrian' dialectal variety employed for such
documents.[4] The questions raised will be the following: is it pos-

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[2] Notice, however, that the Neo-Assyrian dialect proves to have been not only
in use for such 'practical' or 'everyday' documents, i.e. vast groups of letters, ad-
ministrative documents, and legal texts, but also for grants or decrees and treaty
documents (of internal or foreign policy) issued by the kings, as well as for a wide
gamut of texts of different periods, bearing interpretations in the general sphere
of divination (astrological and other reports to the Assyrian kings, royal queries to
the gods, prophecies), and finally for some 'pamphlets' or other literary-political
materials aimed at creating an impact on the policy of the Assyrian kings and their
retinue. In brief, an utterly astonishing variety of textual categories, whether consi-
dered *per se* or in relation to Near Eastern and other societies of antiquity, has come
down to us in the 'everyday language' (cf. below, n. 4) of the Neo-Assyrian empire.

[3] For the corpus of such inscriptions cf. Fales (1986), with an update in Fales
(2000). See also Millard, this volume.

[4] The question of the extent to which written Neo-Assyrian reflected a spoken
contemporary variety might *per se* be viewed as incapable of resolution, especially
in view of the limited but relevant contemporary presence of the Aramaic language
in onomastics or in specific documentary contexts; on the other hand, it certainly
represents a preliminary problem of a certain import for the overall grammatical
presentation of written Neo-Assyrian itself. For general information on the matter,

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sible to sort out this type of material adopting an archival per-
spective, and if so, using which guidelines? What was meant to be
kept and what was not to be kept? To the extent that some of the
'everyday' documents of the later Assyrian empire could have been
stored for a time, and subsequently discarded, what rules governed
these practices? And finally, with reference to the documents that
have been actually found in specific contexts, in which cases may
we speak, at this great distance in time, of actual 'archives' (or
even of more transient 'fonds d'archives')[5] rather than haphazard
pilings-up of documents no more in use?

To approach this set of quite complex questions, it will be use-
ful to introduce here two further distinctions of interdisciplinary
interest and value, drawn from recent theoretical studies on Neo-
Assyrian text-groupings or archives. The first is a classification
which distinguishes between archaeologically 'living' archives, i.e.
archives not only discovered *in situ*, but also in which the occu-
pational level was not subsequently disturbed, 'dead' (*in situ*, but
variously disturbed) archives,[6] and 'silent', i.e. contextually irre-
trievable, archives.[7] The essential value of this classification is that

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I refer to my overview of the two main schools of thought concerning the general
interpretation of Neo-Assyrian epistolography—undoubtedly the most fertile ter-
rain for such an enquiry—provided in Fales (1983), 18–20. And it must also be
remembered that a number of Neo-Babylonian 'practical' texts were discovered in
the Assyrian palaces as well.

[5] Both definitions, which I cull from Veenhof (1986b), 7 (archive as a deposit of
documents no more in use, explicitly preserved for the sake of historical memory;
'fonds d'archive' as a collection of documents accumulated by a person or an insti-
tution on a specific issue for a limited time), presuppose an explicit intention to keep
specific materials side by side in a certain place.

[6] A good example of a well-preserved private archive, albeit from a 'dead' archae-
ological context, is the group of sale and loan documents of Ninurta-šarru-usur, a
'son of the palace', found in recent Iraqi excavations in a pottery vessel moved in
antiquity to a tunnel not far from the Šamaš gate at Nineveh (=TIM 11: nos.3–30).
Cf. TIM 11: 4 for a description; cf. Pedersén (1998), 165.

[7] For this distinction in the archaeological study of Neo-Assyrian archives cf.
Castel (1995) ('archives vivantes, mortes, silencieuses'). I understand that the ad-
jective 'dead' is used elsewhere in this volume (e.g. by H. Baker and others) with a
different meaning as applied to archives. On the other hand, it may be pointed out
that in Castel's terminology the adjective 'silent', although constituting the *degré
zéro* of this particular classification, still implies that an archival reality is/was ar-
chaeologically extant, as in the case of Nineveh (not utilized by Castel herself) or
the Nippur Murašû texts (cf. Castel 1995: 131). Thus, other cases, in which the
archaeological context of a specific group of texts known to us has not been found
(e.g. the Ur III Umma archives (cf. Steinkeller, this volume) or the Assyrian and
Aramaic documents from Ma'allanāte (cf. Garelli 1986)), fall outside this definition.

of appending a 'tag' to different archival entities, so as to refer them back to their specific archaeological context of retrieval, and in general of reminding us, if need be, that a text (especially when written on a clay tablet) is an artefact of archaeo-anthropological interest among others of its kind.[8]

The second distinction concerns the possibility of telling apart the public and private spheres in the relevant collections of 'practical' documents. This problem is on the one hand tied, again, to the archaeological analysis of the context of retrieval (public buildings vs. private residences), but on the other hand is also closely connected with the functional interpretation of the documents themselves—whether they may be attributed to public or to private interests.[9] As may be observed from a number of archives of different period from the ancient Near East,[10] various reciprocal admixtures are possible here, the ultimate nature of which has to be judged case by case. The following six case studies—three relevant to public and three to private archaeological contexts—will show that, at least to a certain extent, the later Assyrian period is no exception to this general 'rule'.

The largest archive of the Neo-Assyrian period comes from Nineveh, the last capital city of the empire,[11] and specifically from two decidedly public buildings: the South-west Palace of Sennacherib and the North Palace of Ashurbanipal on the mound of Kuyunjik, where the largest lot of cuneiform tablets from this age was discovered by Austen Henry Layard and his successors from 1845 onwards.[12] However, owing to the haste and imprecision of the recording methods in the field—and also in the British Museum itself upon the arrival of the flood of materials[13]—this collection of texts is for ever destined to be classified as one the most illustrious

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[8] Cf. Zettler (1996) for a recent overview of the subject.

[9] A similar preliminary approach seems to be adopted in Pedersén (1998), 8.

[10] Cf. Veenhof (1986b), 9–11. On this range of problems for Neo-Assyrian studies, I refer in general to the introductions to CTN 2, CTN 3, and SAA 6.

[11] The possibility that Ashurbanipal could have moved his royal residence away from Nineveh after 645 BC, perhaps to the western city of Harran, is sometimes brought up to explain the absence of epistolary and administrative texts from this period of his reign (cf. Parpola 1986: 235, with previous bibliography), but there is little textual and decidedly no archaeological evidence on the matter.

[12] On Layard cf. Larsen (1996), *passim;* cf. also the contributions by Reade, Walker, and Collon in Fales and Hickey (1987).

[13] For the medley of tablets which were recorded under the single heading of the 'K(uyunjik) Collection' cf. Reade (1986), 213–14.

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contextually 'silent' cases in ancient Near Eastern studies. The fact that Layard and the excavators who followed in his footsteps have left us only the barest information on the places of retrieval of the cuneiform tablets[14] still weighs heavily on the overall methodology of research and publication of this crucial lot of written materials, known as the 'Kuyunjik collection'. However, in all justice, it must be recalled that the excavators' testimonials consistently report that the documents in both palaces were in an incredible shambles upon discovery, presumably because of the cruel sack that the Medes and Chaldeans inflicted on the city.[15]

In recent years detailed investigation of unpublished excavation notebooks has brought about a number of interesting new results regarding the archaeological context of the Kuyunjik texts.[16] Despite such progress, however, it is still a fact that any individual study of the Kuyunjik texts is necessarily confronted at the outset with 'a monolithic conglomeration of tablets without a more definite provenance than the two excavated palace complexes and their environs' (Parpola 1986: 223). All basic inner subdivisions of such a conglomeration have consequently been established by modern contextual research: thus, the materials generally described as 'literary' are nowadays attributed to perhaps two libraries connected in one way or another (as a number of internal cross-references show) to royal interests, respectively dating from Sennacherib's and Ashurbanipal's time.[17]

Much more arduous, on the other hand, is the task of creating an overall framework for the approximately 6,000 non-literary (or

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[14] As recalled by Walker (1987: 183), 'by contrast to his lengthy description of the sculptures, his [= Layard's] account of this [epigraphical] find occupies a mere 3 pages' (see Layard 1853).

[15] As explained by Walker (1987: 184), the palace of Sennacherib, which Layard brought to light in 1849, would already have been in ruin, because of the sack it suffered at the hands of the Medes in 612. A similar muddle of all types of inscribed materials seems to have presented itself to Hormuzd Rassam when he uncovered the Lion Hunt saloon in the North Palace of Ashurbanipal in 1855 (Walker 1987: 184). For further notes by Bezold and King, compilers of the Kuyunjik catalogues, on the state of destruction of Nineveh, cf. Parpola (1986), 222. It must be recalled that even in such a jumble 25 Elamite letters and fragments, possibly indicating a period of occupation of the site after the destruction, were discovered (see most recently Dalley 1993: 143; but cf. Pedersén 1998: 165, who recalls opposite views on the ultimate provenance of such texts).

[16] Cf. Reade (1986), and most recently Pedersén (1998), 158–65.

[17] Parpola (1986), 231–2; Pedersén (1998), 161–3; another library may have been located in the Nabu temple to the south of the North Palace.

'practical') documents in the Neo-Assyrian dialect from the very same palaces, and of dividing the whole corpus into coherent sub-groups.[18] That many different textual products were in reciprocal 'interplay' at one time or another within the Ninevite court is clear from cross-references of various kinds, which may at times give rise to stunningly detailed perspectives on some specific aspect of Neo-Assyrian history.[19] But equally astonishing is the irregular pattern of 'presences' and 'absences' of specific individuals, particular regions of the empire, and definite issues of interest to the royal court in this documentation: some elements of information crop up with outstanding frequency, then rapidly vanish from sight, while others appear at random, leaving a bare trace which possibly does no justice to their impact on Assyrian policy at the time.[20]

I thus believe that the possibility of gaining an exact idea, by contextual or internal means, of which, and how many, of these 'everyday' documents from Nineveh ever historically constituted an 'archive', or which were, by contrast, customarily discardable items, escapes us.[21] Counter to any notion that may be gained from items of detail regarding the efficiency of the Assyrian imperial machine, it must be stated that the available evidence does not even allow decisive proof that specifically established 'bureaux' were at

[18] And also from the second mound of the Nineveh site, Nebi Yunus (cf. Scott and MacGinnis 1990: 66; MacGinnis 1992).

[19] For example, Sargon's building of his new capital Dur-Šarrukīn, which took years, is repeatedly referred to from various points of view in his letters (SAA 1), while the remains of a register of building activities by work squads with their respective output in brick courses is attested among the administrative documents (SAA 11: nos. 15–21).

[20] This evanescent quality of the Nineveh archives is recognized by Parpola (1986), 222: 'As a general notion, the "royal archives of Nineveh" are well known to every Assyriologist. But what does one actually know about them? Strangely, as soon as one is to tell something concrete about them, these archives rapidly vanish into thin air. Did they really exist, or are they a product of the imagination only?'

[21] Note, for example, that one of the very few examples among Neo-Assyrian letters (ABL 382–3, with its container ABL 383) to provide physical evidence that written messages were enclosed at this time within 'signed' clay 'envelopes' was found in Nineveh unopened, moreover bearing a petition to the king which seems to have been the fourth attempt of its kind ("Three letters I have (already) sent to my lord. Why is my lord not willing to send a reply to my letter?'). This state of affairs does not, it must be admitted, lend support to the notion of storage by the Assyrian palace bureaucracy of correspondence in arrival; however, there is certainly reason to argue that, in contrast to the writer of the quoted letter, some officials, and their relevant issues, may have had the privilege, not only of the 'ear' of the king, but also of a specific palatial 'drawer' where their letters were kept.

any time engaged on groups of materials that we may view as largely homogeneous; and we even lack any concrete indication that such 'bureaux', to the extent that they were truly operating, were the product of an organizational model planned from 'on high', and not the chance product of an individual work ethic which was coterminous with the privileges bestowed on the specific courtier, thereby possibly including subservient manpower. In brief, a reconstruction of the Nineveh archives cannot in principle form the object of a large-scale enquiry,[22] although it may be attempted, totally *ex post facto*, in a few cases.

As part of such an attempt, I have selected two examples from the corpus of legal documents from the royal palaces of Nineveh. In accordance with the 'silent' archaeological characteristics of this

[22] Despite these enormous shortcomings in the available record (as regards both internal and external evidence), the notion that the complex of materials in the Neo-Assyrian dialect could have constituted the 'state archives of Assyria' has been defended in recent years by S. Parpola with both caution and tenacity, using arguments similar to those I have employed above: 'The existence of a sort of state archives in Nineveh is certainly not to be doubted. However, one should be extremely cautious in putting an equal mark between these (hypothetical) archives and the heterogeneous mass of extant "archival" texts. As regards the latter, it should be borne in mind that the label "archival" attached to them is rather arbitrary. There is no evidence, other than a certain likelihood, that any of them were ever kept in any sort of separate archives . . . While the total number of texts assuredly not fitting with the concept of "state archives" may not be large, their unquestionable presence in the corpus of "archival" texts calls for caution and underlines the likelihood that the corpus actually consists of many groups of tablets differing from one another in respect of provenance and actual format' (Parpola 1986: 224–5). Such a defence has taken on, over time and *de facto*, the function of supportive conceptual background for the most fruitful and monumental research and publication project yet to have appeared on the horizon of ancient Near Eastern studies. This computer-aided project, accordingly named 'State Archives of Assyria', headed by Parpola at the University of Helsinki with the co-operation of many specialists from different countries, has, in a bare decade or so, almost carried to completion the re-edition of the Kuyunjik 'archival' texts which were originally published in different formats over half a century (approx. 1880–1930), and which moreover proved to require virtually complete philological updating. At the time of writing, the following volumes of texts (bearing full transliterations and translations, and detailed glossaries and indexes, although without commentary) have appeared since 1987: SAA 1 (letters to Sargon, part 1); 2 (treaties and loyalty oaths); 3 (court poetry and literary miscellanea); 4 (queries to the sun god); 4 (letters to Sargon, part 2); 6 (legal texts, part 1); 7 (administrative texts, part 1); 8 (astrological reports); 9 (prophecies); 10 (letters from scholars); 11 (administrative texts, part 2); 12 (grants and decrees), plus 7 volumes of specific studies tied to the corpus, as well as the (very recent) endeavour of a complete prosopography of the Assyrian empire (part 1/i appeared in July 1998). Thus, if nothing else, the notion that the Nineveh documents in Neo-Assyrian formed the 'state archives of Assyria' may be accepted as a heuristic assumption which has proved to be of great functional-scientific value.

overall collection, the findspots of a mere handful out of approximately 800 examples of legal documents[23] can be located with any certainty. However, building on these slim clues, it has been possible to suggest the general places of deposit, within the Kuyunjik palace complexes, of a certain number of texts, organized by the researchers into systematic 'dossiers'[24] pivoting around the individuals centrally involved in the relevant transactions ('central persons') (Parpola, SAA 6, p. xx). As a result of this process of subdivision, it has been deduced that the Nineveh dossiers of legal documents revolved essentially around members of the administration of the harem located in the South-west Palace built by Sennacherib and occupied for most of the seventh century, or military officers in the service of the king or crown prince (SAA 6, p. xx). The very prominence of these officials, and/or their closeness to the royal family, would have been behind the decision to keep their legal and business records within the confines of the palace.[25]

Tables 9.1 and 9.2 below present the reconstructed dossiers of two officials from Nineveh belonging to these social milieux: that

[23] Cf. Parpola in SAA 6, pp. xv–xvi, and xviii for a precise calculation of the number of tablets; also Pedersén (1998), 164 ('804 documents'). Kwasman (1986), 238, speaks less precisely of '600+ Neo-Assyrian legal tablets and fragments housed in the Kuyunjik Collection of the British Museum'.

[24] The term 'dossier' (SAA 6, p. xx) seems to me particularly apt, since the relevant textual groupings were reconstructed exclusively on the basis of 'museum archaeology'; awareness of this situation causes Parpola to state that such dossiers may be called 'archives' for the sake of simplicity 'however inappropriate this term might be in this usage' (SAA 6, p. xx). On the other hand, Kwasman uses the word 'archive' in his contributions more loosely, 'to refer to a collection of documents concerning a particular individual' (NALK xviii) or as 'a collection of documents classified according to specific criteria' (Kwasman 1986: 238), specifying further that this use 'is similar to the words dossier and file'. Interestingly enough, it is this very author who quotes an authoritative lexical definition of archives whereby 'les archives sont l'ensemble des documents reçus ou élaborés par une personne physique ou morale, publique ou privée et destinés par leur nature à être conservés par cette personne même', failing to notice that precisely what we lack in the case of the Nineveh dossiers is knowledge of whether they were 'destinés . . . à être conservés' or not.

[25] Parpola (SAA 6, pp. xx–xxi). Notice that this explanation of the reason for the deposition of the named private legal texts in the Nineveh public buildings, while not unreasonable *per se*, does not seem extensible to clarify the storage in the very same buildings of most of the other legal texts from Nineveh, where greater or smaller 'dossiers' (including 150 with only one text out of a total of *c*.200: cf. Kwasman 1986: 238), relevant to many different professions, are attested. Moreover, it does not tally with the data presented below for the Governor's Palace archive from Kalḫu, where deeds of prominent officials are attested alongside those of the rank and file.

of the village manager Bahiānu (time of Sennacherib) and that of Remanni-Adad, chief charioteer (*mukī appāte dannu*) of Assurbanipal. As will be noted from the tables, the majority of the texts are deeds of sale or individual loan documents[26] in their respective traditional formats. Sales documents have a rectangular shape showing a 2:1 ratio between the vertical and the horizontal axis, with writing along the latter ('vertical' tablets), and with specific zones (usually towards the top of the obverse) marked out for the position of sealings, only the seller's seal being customarily rolled or stamped in this area. On the other hand, contracts, and specifically loan documents (both for silver and for barley), are either inscribed on 'horizontal'[27] tablets enclosed within envelopes bearing the debtor's seal if written in Assyrian cuneiform, or on the so-called 'dockets', crude triangular-shaped lumps of clay,[28] again bearing the debtor's seal, and at times with clear indications of string-marks on the upper edge (Postgate 1997: 161), particularly if written in Aramaic.[29] However, a few ensuing receipts, i.e. deeds of payment/settlement as conclusion of previous transactions (FNALD 55), are also attested, on simple 'horizontal' tablets, devoid of envelope, and sealed exclusively by the recipient.[30]

[26] See NALK xviii for the note that only 2 texts out of the 426 published in the volume (relevant to approx. 200 central persons from Nineveh) present multiple debtors.

[27] That is, with inverted ratios with respect to the 'vertical' shape, and writing along the horizontal axis.

[28] *Tonbullen* in Radner's terminology (1997: 26–31).

[29] For triangular dockets with Assyrian text cf. e.g. the archive of Bahiānu below ('Table 9.3). With Aramaic text this shape is attested both in contracts concerning barley (as in the present cases) and in those for other commodities. Cf. Radner (1997), 26–7, who correctly notes that three Aramaic triangular dockets from Assur concern loans of silver. This practice must now no longer be considered exceptional: two further dockets from Tell Šēḥ-Hamad edited in Röllig (1997) are also examples of silver loans. A further docket from the Louvre, presented by P. Bordreuil in a recent conference (quoted by kind permission), also concerns a loan of silver.

[30] The following conventions are used in Tables 9.1–9.5: H/V: = rectangular tablets with horizontal/vertical writing; T = triangular docket; seal = presence of seal impressions; envelope = presence of enclosing envelope; GN = geographical name, i.e. a toponym (city/region) giving the provenance of one of the parties (usually the opposing one). Footnotes to tables are cued by letters [a] [b] [c] and are positioned at the end of each table.

TABLE 9.1. *The dossier of Bahiānu, from Nineveh*

Text	Function of central person	Type of text	Other data
SAA 6. 60	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal
SAA 6. 61	Redeemer	Redemption of slave	V, seal
SAA 6. 62	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal
SAA 6. 63	Creditor	Loan of copper	H, seal
SAA 6. 64	Creditor	Loan of copper	H, seal
SAA 6. 65	Buyer	Sale of land and people	V, seal
SAA 6. 66	Recipient (?)	Receipt for a female slave (?)[a]	V, seal
SAA 6. 67	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal[b]
SAA 6. 69	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal
SAA 6. 70	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal
SAA 6. 71	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
SAA 6. 72	Recipient	Receipt for repayment of SAA 6. 70	H[c]
SAA 6. 73	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
SAA 6. 74	Creditor	Loan of wheat	T, seal
SAA 6. 75	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
SAA 6. 76	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
SAA 6. 77	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
SAA 6. 78	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal
SAA 6. 79	Creditor	Loan of barley	H (seal?)

[a] This text is quite unique in this archive, because Bahiānu is here mentioned in the seal-identification section, with his (elsewhere unattested) professional name. The formula *mamma issi mamma la idabbub* would point to a receipt (FNALD 57), a type of document which is quite rarely sealed and is usually horizontal (FNALD 55). Thus, the possibility that this text originated in a different archive held in the Nineveh palaces should be considered.

[b] SAA 6. 68 is considered to be a duplicate of this text, although only the seal and the date survive.

[c] Cf. Radner (1997), 27, on the unique physical characteristics of this tablet: 'dieser Text ist auf eine querformatige Tafel ... geschrieben, die der Länge nach von einer Schnur durchgezogen war'.

TABLE 9.2. *The dossier of Remanni-Adad, from Nineveh*

Text	Function of central person	Type of text	Other data
SAA 6. 296	Creditor	Loan of animals	H
SAA 6. 297	Buyer	Sale of people	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 298	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 297	
SAA 6. 299	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 300	Buyer	Sale of male (specialist)	V, seal
SAA 6. 301	Buyer	Sale of male (specialist)	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 305	Buyer	Sale of male (specialist)	V, seal
SAA 6. 306	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 305	
SAA 6. 307	Creditor	Loan of silver	H
SAA 6. 308	Buyer	Sale of ?	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 309	Buyer	Sale of male (specialist)	V, seal
SAA 6. 310	Buyer	Sale of slave	V, seal; seller, GN given
SAA 6. 311	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank); seller, GN given
SAA 6. 312	Buyer	Sale of people	V, seal; seller, GN given
SAA 6. 313	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 312	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 314	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank); seller, GN given
SAA 6. 315	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal
SAA 6. 316	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 315	
SAA 6. 317	Creditor	Loan of silver against pledge	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 319	Creditor	Loan of silver	H, seal
SAA 6. 320	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank); seller, GN given

SAA 6. 321	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 320	V, seal
SAA 6. 322	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 320 (?)	
SAA 6. 323	Creditor	Loan of silver and animals	H (envelope)
SAA 6. 324	Creditor	Duplicate of SAA 6. 323	H, seal (blank)[a]
SAA 6. 325	Buyer	Sale of village	V, seal; seller, GN given
SAA 6. 326	Buyer	Sale of village	V, seal (blank); seller, GN given
SAA 6. 327	[Buyer]	Sale of ?	V
SAA 6. 328	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal
SAA 6. 329	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 330	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 329	V, seal
SAA 6. 331	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal; seller = same as SAA 6. 329, 330 (a scribe)
SAA 6. 332	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal
SAA 6. 333	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 334	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal; seller, GN given[b]
SAA 6. 335	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?); seller, GN given
SAA 6. 336	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?); seller, GN given
SAA 6. 337	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal(?)
SAA 6. 338	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank); seller, GN given (?)
SAA 6. 339	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?); seller, GN given[c]
SAA 6. 340	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 341	Buyer	Sale of people	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 342	Buyer	Sale of people	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 343	Buyer	Sale of people	V, seal (blank)
SAA 6. 344	Buyer	Duplicate of SAA 6. 343	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 345	Buyer	Sale of people	V, seal

SAA 6. 346	Buyer	Sale of people	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 347	Buyer	Sale of a slave	V, seal
SAA 6. 348	Buyer	Sale of people	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 349	Buyer	Sale of ?	V (seal?)
SAA 6. 350	[Buyer]	Sale of ?	V (seal?)

[a] Description of the tablet in FNALD 139.
[b] A brief Aramaic endorsement (=AECT 16) is present on this text.
[c] Cf. Revers 11–13, as possible indicators of this feature.

As may be seen from Tables 9.1 and 9.2, the two dossiers show a few interesting differences in their composition. Bahiānu's texts are almost exclusively loan documents of barley, a type of deed which points in itself to a largely local horizon, as the lack of indication of an outside provenance for the debtors would also seem to confirm. By contrast, the deeds of Remanni-Adad are predominantly conveyances of people and land, and the real-estate sales in particular concern possessions in eastern and (especially) western provinces of the empire, all quite far from Nineveh (cf. Fales 1987). This characteristic, together with other features, such as the large number of different scribes employed, some hints of Aramaic linguistic influence, and a few cases of quaint onomastic variation, has prompted Kwasman to suggest that these texts could have been brought together in Nineveh after being composed originally in the different areas to which the transactions referred (Kwasman 1986: 239–40).

In this light, attention should be drawn to the further peculiarity of a large number of inner duplicates of Remanni-Adad's deeds, at times with one sealed and one non-sealed[31] specimens of the same text, whereas no duplicates mark Bahiānu's dossier. Now, should this feature be put down to the particular composition of Remanni-Adad's original complex of deeds, such as would have 'migrated' with him to Nineveh, where his main institutional seat as royal charioteer lay, or should it be ascribed to an attempt of the Nineveh scribes to build up a duplicate collection of this official's deeds to be kept in the palace? The question seems difficult if not impossible to settle from the available evidence, but it may be noticed that it anticipates the somewhat similar problems posed by the archival setting, which will be dealt with below.

[31] That is, with the space for sealings left blank. Kwasman (1986), 239, calculated that the duplicates constituted 13% of the total.

As a second case, I now turn to an archive from an essentially 'living' context (from the archaeological standpoint), which again relates to a public function as far as its findspot is concerned. The site is that of Nimrud, corresponding to the Assyrian city of Kalḫu, which served as capital from the ninth to the late eight century BC. Here the excavations of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq[32] were carried out from 1949 to 1963, and have been resumed since by the Department of Antiquities of Iraq, with the aid of Polish and Italian teams.[33] Within the walls of this Assyrian city, various public buildings have yielded a large quantity of written materials of Neo-Assyrian date, which have in the main been given swift and efficient publication.[34]

I give here a brief analysis of one well-studied case, the Governor's Palace archive.[35] This is a body of 217 texts, dating from the middle of the ninth to the last quarter of the eighth century, which comprises letters, legal and administrative documents, and a number of clay sealings. All the material was recovered from relatively clear (although at times archaeologically disturbed) contexts, pointing to the existence of a few rooms (rooms K, M, and S), located around the central courtyard, specifically used for archival purposes, which were abandoned as such after 710 BC, with the consequence that the discarded texts became part of the fill on which a new floor level was subsequently placed (CTN 2. 3 ff.). In one room (S) a square brick table or pedestal covered the tablets, and it has been asked whether this was not, in fact, the remnant of

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[32] Earlier excavations were carried out by Layard (1845–51), who initially mistook the site for the biblical Nineveh.

[33] Cf. *RlA*, s.v. *Kalḫu*, 305–7, for the bibliography of excavations by date and area up to 1976.

[34] The following list is based on *RlA* 308–20 (RI = royal inscriptions, LT = library texts, AD = archival documentation): Temple of Ninurta RI; Temple of Šarrat-nipḫi RI; Temple of Nabû RI, LT, AD (legal/administrative); North-West palace RI; Ziggurrat Terrace AD (8th-cent. brick 'filing cabinets' with legal documents. and letters; 7th-cent. legal/administrative); Central Palace RI; South-West palace RI; Burnt Palace AD (letters, sealings); South-East Palace RI; Governor's Palace AD (letters, legal/administrative); the 1950 building RI, AD; TW 53 houses AD (legal/administrative, late 7th cent.); Review Palace (Fort Shalmaneser) RI, AD (letters, legal/administrative); Palace in PD 5 RI (letter, Neo-Babylonian); 'Town Wall Palace' RI. Cf. also Pedersén (1998), 148–53, where a total of 17 archives are attributed to the site.

[35] Published by J. N. Postgate in CTN 2, together with other smaller groups of Nimrud texts (from trenches A49 and A50, from 'the 1950 building', and from the Burnt Palace and North-West Palace: cf. above, and see the detailed list provided in CTN 2. 255 ff.). Cf. also the brief account in Pedersén (1998), 151.

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rows of brick boxes, such as were found elsewhere at Nimrud to accommodate letters and administrative documents.[36]

The Governor's Palace archive presents, as indicated, materials of various types, which defy any preconceived notion concerning the distinction between the private and the public sphere. Of largely official interest are the approximately 30 letters[37] which were found together in room S, and which may be divided into letters received by the governors from the Assyrian kings, from governors of neighbouring provinces, and from subordinate personnel,[38] and letters sent from the palace, one from an unknown individual to the king and one from the governor to a dependant (CTN 2, nos. 180, 190), which could be copies of original messages. Similarly, the numerous administrative documents dealing with personnel, animals, and various commodities,[39] and the quite unique corpus of clay sealings, clearly pertain to the general area of official activities (mainly of provincial range) carried out within the palace. Consistently with Neo-Assyrian practice, both letters and administrative texts are undated.

Quite different, on the other hand, is the picture to be derived from the very abundant lot of legal documents discovered in the same contextual setting, which go back to a large number of different individuals, while at the same time providing, through the witness lists, a good prosopographical cross-section of the society of Kalḫu revolving around the Governor's Palace. It is also through the datings consistently given in these texts that the five governors of the Kalḫu province in office during the period of the archives may be placed in sequence. The best known of the governors is Bēl-arṣi-iluma, active between the last decade of the ninth and the first of the eighth century (or perhaps even slightly longer); although there are only a few documents dated with certainty to his governorship, it has been reasonably suggested that the majority of legal texts from rooms K and M belong to the period *c*.800–770 BC (CTN 2, no. 10), coinciding at least in part with his time in office. Furthermore, Bēl-tarṣi-iluma himself appears as a principal in a few of the legal documents. Of these, three texts (CTN 2, nos. 90,

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[36] On the Ziggurrat Terrace cf. CTN 2. 6, with previous bibliography.

[37] CTN 2, nos. 180–211; cf. also 230. On the characteristics of this letter corpus cf. CTN 2. 21–23.

[38] It is unclear whether the two Neo-Babylonian letters addressed to the governor Bēl-dan (CTN 2, nos. 201–2) were sent by a relative or by a subordinate using highly formalized language.   [39] Cf. CTN 2. 20 for a description.

91, 93) in which the governor is explicitly said to clear the debts incurred by a number of individuals are of particular interest.[40] It has been suggested that in all such cases, despite the difference in profession of the various debtors, only some of whom could have formed part of his personal retinue, Bēl-tarṣi-iluma 'was acting in his official capacity as a governor' (CTN 2. 17), as part of a government policy to protect creditors from bankruptcy.[41]

Within the legal documents of the Governor's Palace dating from Bēl-tarṣi-iluma's period of office, a few groups stand out as possibly constituting collections, or archives, of private deeds: one such archive is composed of the 7 sale texts where Bēl-issēya, variously defined as 'village inspector' or 'eunuch of Bēl-tarṣi-iluma, governor of Kalḫu', acts as purchaser of people and real estate, even at some distance from the city (CTN 2. 12 ff.). The same applies to the roughly contemporary sale documents of Sîn-ētir, brother of Bēl-tarṣi-iluma (7 texts), and Šamaš-kumša, 'eunuch of Adad-nirari (III), king of Assyria' (3 texts), and there are also a number of persons mentioned once or twice as purchasers of land. Some at least, perhaps all, of these people could have had a professional association with the governor and his activities (CTN 2. 14–16).

In sum, then, the Governor's Palace of Kalḫu gives us a picture of a specific public context, in which archives of various sorts seem to have been stored together, some of them going back to the activities of the Kalḫu administration, others decidedly relevant to the private business of personnel connected with the palace and the city. In itself, this finding at a single archaeological locus confirms and refines the view to be gained from the much wider, and 'silent', medley of the Nineveh texts—that public buildings could also accommodate the individual business deeds of members of the relevant administration. At the same time, however, it must be said that the archival logic behind the presence of these private archives in the palaces still escapes us. Even instances, quoted above, of the governor's active intervention in some legal proceedings concerning his subordinates do not allow us to choose between the two solutions already suggested for Nineveh: (1) that the storage of

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[40] For a full discussion cf. CTN 2. 17–18.

[41] Cf. CTN 2. However, the further assertion that 'this solution also provides an explanation of why the texts were preserved in the Governor's Palace', rather than in a (supposed, but not discovered) private residence of Bēl-tarṣi-iluma, seems to duck the circularity of argument, at least from the point of view of archival research adopted here.

originally private documents in the palace was a condition of the principals' employment; or (2) that some members of the palace administration kept copies of their personal archives in their official work quarters, for whatever reason.

From the site of Tell Halaf, on the upper reaches of the Khabur, corresponding to the Assyrian provincial capital of Guzana, two archives have come down to us through the German excavations in the early part of the twentieth century, the first of which will be discussed here. The main complex of texts, just short of 100 in number, many of which are fragmentary,[42] was discovered within the North-east Palace,[43] and pertains to the figure and function of Mannu-kī-Aššur, governor of Guzana during the latter part of the reign of Adad-nirari III (810–783 BC). This archive is of some interest in relation to the two cases discussed above: although it must be ascribed to a 'dead' archaeological context—the texts seem to have been placed in the fill of a later rebuilding phase[44]—at the same time it points to an unequivocal public function, with no addition or intrusion of materials pertaining to the private business of the principals.

The Mannu-kī-Aššur archive, one of the oldest preserved textual complexes of the Neo-Assyrian period, is essentially divided into two parts. A smaller lot of documents is made up of official correspondence, which includes originals of letter-orders (*abat šarri*) of Adad-nirari III to the governor,[45] originals of letters from other imperial officials to the same individual (TH 9–12), and letters (archival copies?) sent from Mannu-kī-Aššur himself to a number of individuals (TH 13–16). To this lot may be added a small number of fragments of memorandums mentioning the governor (TH 17–19). The remainder of the archive comprises undated administrative notes of various size, listing palace and provincial personnel, animals, various types of weapons and materials for war, and occasional payments or allotments of land.

Thus viewed, Mannu-kī-Aššur's collection of documents pre-

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[42] TH 1–97; cf. Friedrich *et al.* (1940), 8–45. Some reduction of these numbers was obtained by making joins between fragments kept in the British Museum (Fales 1979); thus 85 tablets are counted by Pedersén (1998), 172.

[43] And specifically, in a room of a building adjoining the terrace of the palace, on the southern flank: cf. Pedersén (1998), 172–3, for the exact location of the findspot.

[44] Cf. Pedersén (1998), 172, with previous literature.

[45] TH 1. 3–7. Notice also the memorandum concerning the delivery of a royal message to the governor by a courier (TH 2).

sents a strong structural resemblance to the Governor's Palace archive from Kalḫu, the essential difference being, as hinted above, that no legal documents of any type form part of this corpus. On a closer look, however, it may be asked whether the Guzana texts could have represented a group of documents which were assembled for a specific purpose, or at a specific moment in time, and subsequently discarded together.[46] Despite the consistent lack of absolute dates, it may be noticed that the letters to the governor, both from the king and from high officials, seem largely concerned with the muster of troops and chariot teams for a war effort. As for the administrative materials, the lists of personnel have no obvious aim, save that of simply recording the personal names and the places of origin of the people involved, which would fit best with the day-by-day arrival of men for a muster; the lists of weapons would tally with this picture, all the more so as an arms deposit was discovered on the site (Friedrich *et al.* 1940: 32). In conclusion, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that this collection of texts represents a full layer of official documentation, tied to a particular situation or time, and discarded in its entirety after its function as a 'fonds d'archive' was over. Were it so, an extra stone would have been added to the complex mosaic of Neo-Assyrian public archival remains, helping us to understand more precisely, for example, why specific 'hoards' of official correspondence on single themes have come down to us from the excavations of Nineveh, while others are lost—for the time being or perhaps for all time.

I now consider three cases of private archives from this period. The first and most important site for this archival category is undoubtedly that of Assur, corresponding to modern Qal'at Šergat, which functioned as the first capital city of Assyria down to the ninth century, and thereafter remained in very high standing within the empire as the seat of the national deity's temple. The German excavations conducted by W. Andrae in the first two decades of the twentieth century brought to light not only some Old Akkadian and numerous Middle Assyrian texts from public and private contexts (mainly in the northern part of the city), but also a large number of Neo-Assyrian complexes of documents (mainly in the eastern, but also the north-western, part). The high quality of archaeological publications concerned with the site and the catalogue of the texts

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[46] This possibility will be discussed elsewhere.

drawn from all available information allow us to study the Assur textual material essentially as a 'living' archival reality.[47]

The Neo-Assyrian texts from Assur pertain to two quite different spheres, viewed from an archival-historical perspective: in the first place, we have 8 complexes that may be legitimately called 'libraries', since they are basically composed of written materials for general purposes of consultation (cf. Pedersén 1998: 11–85). From both the archaeological and the internal point of view, these complexes may be subdivided as follows: libraries found in public buildings, i.e. those found in the temple of Aššur,[48] and in the palace of Sennacherib's son;[49] libraries found in private houses inhabited by families of temple personnel (scribes,[50] chief singers,[51]

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[47] For the textual material from the German excavations at Assur, of which the larger part is in the Vorderasiatisches Museum of Berlin and the rest in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, cf. most recently Pedersén (1998), 81–8, 132–43; but the essential reference work remains Pedersén (1985) (Old Akkadian and Middle Assyrian) and (1986) (Neo-Assyrian), where a general description of the archaeological context and a numbering of the precisely identified tablets, along with mention of many more items of doubtful identification, are given from the information provided in Andrae's books and excavation notebooks, as well as from the extant photographs of the tablets. At the time of Pedersén's catalogue, owing to the division of Germany, the Assur Neo-Assyrian material was almost totally unpublished, and so matters have remained hitherto for the eight libraries mentioned below; while in the intervening time much has been done, thanks to the kind co-operation of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft and the Directors of the Berlin Museum, on private archives of legal and administrative documents held in Berlin (cf. Fales and Jakob-Rost 1991, and Deller, Fales, and Jakob-Rost 1995 [1997], as well as other materials referred to in Radner 1997, and Klengel-Brandt and Radner 1997). At present, the Berlin texts fall within the framework of the 'Assur-Projekt', constituted under the aegis of the two above-named German institutions, which unites archaeologists and philologists for the full publication of the materials discovered by W. Andrae (cf. Renger 1997). A full publication of the Istanbul archival material has been announced by V. Donbaz (private communication, 1998). For some of the texts discovered in more recent Iraqi excavations on the site, cf. below.

[48] This is the complex dubbed N1 by Pedersén (1986: 12–28), comprising 156 numbered items in his preliminary catalogue, but with reference to 'probably even several hundred' texts in the excavator's reports. In Pedersén (1998), 132, 'at least 300 clay tablets and perhaps several hundreds more' are mentioned for this find-spot.

[49] Pedersén's N5 (1986: 76–82), comprising 26 numbered items, but with reference to 89 baked/unbaked texts in the excavator's reports. Cf. Pedersén (1998), 134.

[50] Pedersén's N2 (1986: 29–34), comprising '65 clay tablets' (Pedersén 1998: 134).

[51] Pedersén's N3 (1986: 34–41), comprising 'more than 130 clay tablets' (Pedersén 1998: 134).

and exorcists[52]); and libraries found in the private houses of people with unspecified qualifications.[53]

The materials assembled in the south-west courtyard of the temple of Aššur also comprised texts from older periods; the main bulk is formed by Neo-Assyrian lexical, literary, religious, and scientific works; a compact group comprises documents of royal origin, in both Standard Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian; and there are also random administrative lists, apparently tied to the economy of the temple.[54] In the prince's palace, as well, literary texts, hemerologies, and incantations were accompanied by a smattering of texts of royal origin and everyday documents, including a letter. Different, but structurally similar, admixtures of 'high' materials for professional consultation, some documentation originating from or tied to the interests of the Assyrian court, and decidedly everyday texts, quite probably connected with the private interests of the owners of the buildings, appear to come from the private houses of temple personnel etc. Thus, in general, it may be stated that no single locus of retrieval at Assur, in which a 'library' function may be posited on the basis of statistical frequency and contextual coherence, was devoid of material also pertaining to practical or business affairs: that is, no such library lacked a parallel complex of 'archival-type' documents, although only further study can clarify possible contexts of interaction between these two spheres of interest.

The second archival-historical grouping borne out by the Assur finds, and the one that mainly concerns us here, is that of 27 collections of (mainly seventh-century) texts retrieved within single-household sites, which exclusively concerned the private economic activities of the members of the households themselves, together with their business associates (regular or occasional, as the case may be).[55] The great majority of texts in these private archives from Assur are of a legal nature, comprising sales documents, debt-notes of various kinds (credits/debts *vis-à-vis* extra-familial entities, as

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[52] Pedersén's N4 (1986: 41–76), comprising 'about 800 clay tablets' (Pedersén 1998: 135).

[53] Pedersen's N6–N8 (1986: 81–5), comprising 53 tablets altogether (Pedersén 1998: 136).

[54] The quantity of non-literary materials in the N1 complex is such as to prompt Pedersén to state decidedly that 'this library was combined with an archive' (Pedersén 1998: 132).

[55] The sole exception would seem to be the fragment of a literary text found in the context of one of the archives (N28 (29): cf. Pedersén 1986: 122). This archive is as yet unpublished.

well as contracts for inter-familial enterprises), inheritance deeds, adoptions, and judicial decisions. A smaller group consists of lists or memorandums of people or commodities, which, in their lack of dating and reference to wider contexts, betray their non-official, in fact random and personal, origin and scope. Other documents are rare indeed, but appear to be equally concerned with the private affairs of the principals, although they may at the same time shed some light on wider issues of social and political interest.[56]

In a limited number of cases the principals belong to families associated with specific professions, in the general area of craftsmanship (carpet-weavers (?)[57] and goldsmiths[58]) or of food-processing (oil-pressers[59]), presumably in the service of the temple of Aššur. As such, some of their documents reflect the existence of wider 'guilds' of these professions within the city (Fales 1997), but only incidentally, since, as has been said, it is the *private* business of the named parties that forms the object of such archives. In the majority of cases, however, blood ties among the principals mentioned in the documents, sometimes over more than one generation, seem to have been the sole guiding principle behind the collections of texts discovered in the houses.[60] Further hints of inner ties within the different households are provided by cases of linguistic capability in varieties other than Assyrian: thus one household had an obvious Luwian linguistic-cultural component, as proved by a number of lead strips in hieroglyphic characters,[61] and a number of others had

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[56] From Pedersén's archive N14 comes the letter KAV 197, dealing with the grievances of the oil-pressers' guild at the hands of greedy higher officials (see Fales 1997 for a translation, with previous bibliography); a letter from a man to his father is attested in Pedersén N31 (56); and the well-known Assur Ostracon in Aramaic was the sole text discovered in an inner room of a private house, perhaps having fallen down into the shaft of the grave chamber (cf. Pedersén 1986: 113–14, with bibliography). The Luwian texts referred to in n. 61 below also appear to be business letters.

[57] Pedersén's N9 and N10 (1986: 85–97): cf. Fales and Jakob-Rost (1991) for the publication of these two archives, and pp. 15–26 for the 'guild' of the *ḫundurayyus*; also Fales (1997) and Postgate (1995) (with a different interpretation of the meaning of the professional name).

[58] Pedersén's N33 (1986: 131–5). On this archive a 1994 dissertation by K. Radner is at present being prepared for publication.

[59] Pedersén's N14 (1986: 99–103): cf. Deller, Fales, and Jakob-Rost (1995 [1997]), 10–11, for a discussion.

[60] Cf. the introductions (by Fales) to Fales and Jakob-Rost (1991) and Deller, Fales, and Jakob-Rost (1995 [1997]) for the dating of the texts, and the most obvious prosopographical links which may be discerned therein.

[61] Pedersén's N13 (cf. Pedersén 1986: 98–9, with previous bibliography).

an Aramaic one, as borne out by an ostracon and a few clay tablets in alphabetic script,[62] while an Egyptian origin may be surmised for a further household.[63]

From the archaeological point of view, a similar picture emerges from a consideration of the predominant findspots of the materials: the private archives from Assur were discovered either within large 'archival' pots[64] or in the innermost rooms, or at other times as fills beneath the most recent floors of the dwellings, and sometimes even deposited in the proximity of sarcophagi or other forms of interment *intra muros* of members of the family group.[65] And finally, a few texts provide us with a fleeting, but crucial, point of contact between the depositional history of these archives and their contents: I refer to a small number of deeds of sale, in which it may be suggested that the urban house being acquired was the very same one where the texts were discovered.[66]

In brief, then, the recent publication of a number of these private archives from Assur has helped to raise a few questions of more advanced character concerning their origin and function. To give an example of their contents, I shall here quote the archive of the treasurer Aššur-mātu-taqqin,[67] with some of his family members and/or business associates, uncovered by Iraqi archaeologists in 1979–80 in the New City, i.e. the extension of the city towards the south, and only recently published (Ahmad 1996; cf. Pedersén 1998: 143). This archive, comprising 34 tablets,[68] was found in the stone

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[62] Pedersén's N5, N17, N18, N27.

[63] Pedersén's N31; the main clues for an Egyptian origin of the people here seem to be gentilics and personal names in the texts, as well as the Egyptianizing style of some associated objects. The importance of the archaeological indicator here should not be underestimated, and other textual finds involving Egyptian groups in Assyrian sites would bear further checking for possible associations of this type (cf. Pedersén and Troy 1993 for the archive of Ninurta-šarru-uṣur from Nineveh).

[64] As noted by Pedersén (1986), 140, clay pots at Assur were exclusively used for the storage of private business documents: thus, for example, within the complex N2, relevant to the library of a family of scribes which also comprised a private archive, only parts of the latter (13 texts) were discovered within a pot (cf. Pedersén 1986: 33, ad M).

[65] Cf. Pedersén (1987). The judgement as to whether in the latter two instances the texts were explicitly deposited in an 'archival cache' of sorts, or whether they were instead regarded as discardable—i.e. whether we are dealing with a 'living' or 'dead' archival situation—must of course be reached case by case, with a full scrutiny of the available archaeological reports: cf. Miglus (1996).

[66] Cf. NATAPA 33, 73, Pedersén's N29 (4), etc.; cf. also AMT 10, below.

[67] For the prosopographical profile of this individual cf. PNA 195[a–b].

[68] As a matter of fact, the total of tablets discovered in the room would seem to

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door-socket of a room in a private house in the area of the south-west corner of the town wall; the available dates are all post-648 BC, with only two exceptions (679, 666).[69] Table 9.3 lists the 23 documents of the archive mentioning Aššur-mātu-taqqin as a principal; of the remainder (AMT 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 17, 20, 26, 27, 33), some probably centre around unspecified relatives or business associates of the family, some (see AMT 5, 6) go back to periods prior to Aššur-mātu-taqqin's operational phase, including the time of his father, Mannu-ki-Arba'il (AMT 12) while AMT 29 is a memorandum, or draft of a business letter, the writer of which is not given.

TABLE 9.3. *The archive of the family of Aššur-mātu-taqqin's* [=AMT], *from Assur*

Text	Function of central person	Type of text	Other data
AMT 3	Buyer	Sale of slave	V, seal
AMT 4	Buyer	Sale of female slave	V, seal; Seller, GN given
AMT 7	Buyer (with 2 others)	Sale of female slave	V, seal; Seller, GN given
AMT 8	Buyer (with 1 other)	Sale of slave	V, seal
AMT 9	Buyer	Sale of female slave	V, seal[a]
AMT 10	Buyer	Sale of real estate	V, seal (blank)
AMT 11	Buyer	Sale of female slave	V, seal
AMT 13	Creditor	Loan of silver	H (envelope), seal
AMT 14	Creditor	Loan of silver with work agreement	H (envelope), seal; seller, GN given
AMT 15	Creditor	Loan of various commodities	H (envelope), seal (blank); seller, GN given

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have been 52 (Ahmad 1996: 207), and this number is considered by Pedersén (1998), 143, to represent the totality of Aššur-mātu-taqqin's archive; however, only 34 texts are published in Ahmad's study, and it is possible that the remainder was lost or misplaced at the Iraq Museum.

[69] Cf. Ahmad (1996), 208, with reference to the materials assembled in Millard (1994); but AMT 6 should now be dated to Issi-Adad-anēnu, 679 BC (cf. PNA 194[b]).

AMT 16	Creditor	Loan of silver	H (envelope), seal
AMT 18	Creditor (with 1 other)	Loan of silver	H (envelope), seal
AMT 19	Creditor	Loan of silver	H, seal
AMT 21	Debtor (with 1 other)	Loan of silver for commercial activities	H (envelope)
AMT 22	Creditor	Loan of silver	H, seal
AMT 23	Debtor (with 2 others)	Loan of silver for commercial activities	H, seal
AMT 24	Debtor/ creditor	Loan of silver for commercial activities	H
AMT 25	Addressee of private letter[b]	Concerns commercial activities	V
AMT 28	Co-writer of private letter	Concerns commercial activities (?)	V
AMT 30	Adoptant (with 1 other)	Adoption of son	V, seal (blank)
AMT 31	Legatee of inheritance	Division of inherit-ance	V, seal
AMT 32	Litigant,	Judicial document (*dīnu*)	H, seal
AMT 34	Litigant,	Judicial document (*dīnu*)	V, seal

[a] The seller might have been from a different GN, on the basis of the presence of a witness 'from Nineveh' (URU.*Ni-na-a-a*), Rev. 21.

[b] The text opens with the formula 'Tablet of X' (IM PN1, IM PN2).

Aššur-mātu-taqqin's archive may be ranked among the most il-luminating private collection of texts of the Neo-Assyrian period, albeit fully in line with a number of other archaeologically 'living' exemplars from the Assur excavations. A cursory glance reveals that a lively variety of texts made up this and other Assur collec-tions of family business deeds. The quite abundant contract texts (individual as well as multiple, essentially represented by loans,

but also by debt-notes and work contracts) and sale documents, including the deed for the very house where the family lived (AMT 10), coexist with legal materials of different type, such as adop-tions, court records, or the intriguing debtor/creditor contracts for commercial ventures. Even private letters regarding business mat-ters form part of this archive: in line with other private collec-tions of texts from Assur, the main unifying principle here seems to have been the fact that only documents recording the princi-pals' role as possessors of the goods being transacted (whether as buyers of property or as creditors waiting to collect)[70] were kept.

I now move back to Guzana/Tell Halaf, in order to consider the second archive discovered on the site, dated to the late seventh century and pertaining to an indisputably private context, with particular linguistic characteristics. The archive is composed of 10 tablets,[71] equally divided between Assyrian cuneiform and Aramaic alphabetic script,[72] all of which refer back to a single individual, Il-manani (*Il-ma-na-ni/'lmnny*). This small collection of documents originates from an area where private houses were placed above earlier ruins of public buildings, and was found stored inside a jar.[73]

Il-manani's texts are all of legal content, and the majority, includ-ing those written in Aramaic, are loan documents: the triangular 'docket' format characterizes the alphabetic texts (all relevant to loans of barley seed), while the cuneiform texts (loans of silver and barley seed) are consistently of 'horizontal' shape.[74] The Assyrian texts also comprise a sale document of a male slave, and a court order.[75] As has long been established, there is a general consistency in the names of witnesses on Il-manani's side attested within the

[70] The sole exception is that of the particular category of 'commercial loans', i.e. of collective loans made out for a commercial expedition, where, as noted most recently by Ahmad (1996), 256, the situation of being at the same time debtor and creditor 'is not unexpected'; see also further examples from Assur in NATAPA 1–140.

[71] In point of fact, there are 11 items, but TH 104 seems to have been the envelope of TH 101 (cf. Friedrich *et al.* 1940: 53).

[72] TH 101–6 and Th Aram. 1–5; cf. AECT, nos. 53–7, for the latter. Unfortu-nately, the Aramaic texts were destroyed in the bombing of the Berlin Tell Halaf museum during World War II, so their study must be based on older copies or extant photographs: cf. AECT 238–52.

[73] See Friedrich *et al.* (1940), 47, for a description of the findspot and the circum-stances of discovery; and cf. most recently Pedersén (1998), 175.

[74] See Friedrich *et al.* (1940), pls. 18–21 (cuneiform), 30–1 (Aramaic).

[75] TH 103, 106. For the latter text see also the re-edition in FNALD, no. 47.

two sets of documents and between them.[76] The setting thus seems basically local, although the origin of the opposing parties from areas outside Guzana is noted in various cases. On the other hand, it may be pointed out that in the sole judicial document of this archive (TH 106), which, on the basis of internal evidence, records a case which was judged before Adad, the main deity of Guzana, Il-manani himself is identified as originating from a small settlement, presumably located in the outlying region. Should we thus surmise that Il-manani's archive recorded the activities of a small village businessman who subsequently moved to town? However that may be, Table 9.4 gives the basic outline of this group of bilingual materials.

TABLE 9.4. *The archive of Il-manani, from Guzana*

Text	Function of central person	Type of text	Other data
TH 101	Creditor	Loan of various commodities	H, seal
TH 102	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal; debtor, GN given
TH 103	Buyer	Sale of slave	V, seal; seller, GN given
TH 105	Creditor	Loan of barley	H, seal; debtors, GN given
TH 106	Litigant₁	Judicial document (*egirtu ša šulmu*, l. 5)	H, seal; litigant₂, GN given
AECT 53 = TH Aram. 1	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
AECT 54 = TH Aram. 2	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
AECT 55 = TH Aram. 3	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal
AECT 56 = TH Aram. 4	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal (?)
AECT 57 = TH Aram. 5	Creditor	Loan of barley	T, seal

[76] Cf. Lipinski (1975), 114 ff.; AECT 239 ff. This evidence is fully presented in Fales (2000).

A final variant on the material that may constitute a Neo-Assyrian private archive is provided by the collection of texts (Assyrian, with a limited number of Aramaic documents) discovered at Tell Ahmar, corresponding to the late Neo-Assyrian provincial capital Til-Barsip, by an Australian expedition in the 1980s.[77] Both the 20 texts in cuneiform, many of which are fragmentary, and the 2 alphabetic tablets derive from the debris resulting from the destruction of the earliest phase of a building (C1) at the western area of the settlement, and were scattered over three adjacent rooms— that is, they belong to a 'dead' archaeological context.[78] As to the nature of the building, it has been deduced that its original function as a residential structure could have changed, more or less around the time when the tablets were written/discarded, to that of a centre for industrial activities (weaving and dyeing) (Bunnens 1996–7: 61).

The best preserved of the cuneiform documents are 5 texts[79] which centre around the figure of one *Ha-(an)-ni-i* (Hanni) and his associates in private business, and cover a range of some twenty-five years, from 658 to the mid-post-canonical period.[80] The subect matter of these deeds seems decidedly local (no toponyms of origin are given for any of the parties), but originally the area concerned may not have been the city of Til Barsip itself. That the principal Hanni may have originated from the countryside around the provincial capital is suggested by the earliest text (T 14), in which the local authorities grant immunity from any legal proceedings to the principal and one of his colleagues, 'when they come to Til Barsip',[81] prior to the arrival of a sealed tablet con-

[77] Bunnens (1996–7); Dalley (1996–7). Pedersén (1998), 175–1, still notes these texts as unpublished.

[78] Cf. Bunnens (1996–7), 61–5, and especially the plan on p. 64. A fragment of limestone plaque was also discovered at Til Barsip (cf. Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet 1996–7: 102–3), but appears to derive from a quite different archaeological context (cf. Bunnens 1996–7: 62).

[79] Cf. Table 9.5 below; T7 may also belong to this archive.

[80] The only clearly dated documents of Hanni are T 14 (658), T 4 (650), and T 6 (perhaps 635); see on the datings in general Dalley (1996–7), 66–7, who, however, treats the dates on Hanni's texts together with those on the remaining documents. Her idea that the Hanni attested here could be the same person as an individual from Assur of the post-canonical period seems slightly far-fetched.

[81] T 14. 5: the name of the city is given in the common 7th-cent. form URU.*Tar-bu-si-ba*. Cf. the Aramaic transcription *trbšyb* in a contemporaneous text discovered in the site of Tell Shioukh Fawqani/Burmarina, some 18 km. to the north (Fales 1996: Rev. 19).

cerning them in the Governor's Palace.[82] The remaining materials from the same findspot are totally random in their contents and prosopographical links: the legible documents include three texts, ranging from 649 to the post-canonical period, in which one Issar-duri is named, but which have absolutely no inner 'archival' consistency (T 13, T 18, T 20);[83] a loan document of silver, the principal of which is lost, which goes back to 685 BC; and finally, one administrative text of apparently public scope, concerning the disbursement of mixed commodities related to dyeing activities (T 12).[84]

The question may thus be raised as to whether, in fact, the Til Barsip material should be termed a collection of documents going back to private business(es), or whether it may not represent the most ragged remnant of a composite collection of documents such as we have found assembled together, for example, in the Governor's Palace of Kalḫu. The former hypothesis has, to my mind, its basic mainstay in a certain variety of text-types which make up even the minuscule Hanni group (cf. Table 9.5), and which recall to some extent the Assur and Guzana private archives. The latter view, on the other hand, may be upheld by the presence of the harem governess, a high female public figure in the Neo-Assyrian palace, as principal in a sale document, by a ration list of barley seed (T 1), and by the presence of individuals from Dur-Šarruken and Kalḫu in a fragmentary witness list (T 22)—all features which bring to mind the palace milieus of Nineveh and other public contexts of the empire. That said, I refrain from a clear-cut judgement on the matter.

At the end of this review of Neo-Assyrian archives coming from different sites, and presenting a variety of contextual and functional characteristics, a number of conclusions may be drawn.

Private legal documents are to be found in the Neo-Assyrian period, as they are in other periods of Mesopotamian history,

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[82] For NA *dabābu* 'to litigate' cf. FNALD 189b. The translation of this verb as 'to speak' by Dalley (1996–7), 84–5, despite K. Radner's correct interpretation, brings about a misunderstanding of the entire scope of the document.

[83] See Dalley (1996–7), 66, 88: T 13 has Issar-duri as a witness in an acquisition of a slave by the harem governess (*šakintu*), T 18 repeatedly mentions a man by the same name in a list of silver disbursements, T 20 shows Issar-duri as a principal in a loan of silver.

[84] The connection between this text and the industrial activities documented in the archaeological record of building C1 does not seem to have been noted either by the archaeologist or by the philologist of the Tell Ahmar expedition.

TABLE 9.5. *The archive of Hanni, from Til Barsip*

Text	Function of central person	Type of text	Other data
T2	Creditor	Loan of silver	H
T4[a]	Creditor	Loan of silver	H
T6	Creditor	Loan of silver	H
T8	Buyer	Sale of slave woman and daughter	H
T9	Buyer	Slave of slave	H
T14	Object of decree	Decree of local authorities	H, seal

[a] T3 is the envelope of this text: see Dalley (1996–7), 73.

both in specifically private archaeological settings and within larger groups of written materials stored in public structures, even including collections of traditional texts for consultation purposes (cf. e.g. the libraries of Assur). In all cases these legal documents appear to be centred around the parties who were possessors of the goods being transacted (as creditors or buyers).

From the available evidence, it has been noted above that the main difference between these two contexts, as far as private legal documents are concerned, seems to be the greater variety of materials and more complex business situations exhibited by the collections of 'family deeds' discovered on site. These could also include supportive evidence for the private transactions, such as letters, or the records of court cases stemming from business activities (cf. Il-manani's and Hanni's archives). By contrast, the groups of private deeds which may be attached to single individuals in palatial or other public environments, not only in the reconstructed dossiers of individual courtiers from Nineveh but also in the 'living' context of Kalḫu, appear more standardized and typologically less varied.[85]

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[85] Some slight exceptions to this 'rule' are, however, attested. Cf. the dossier of Silim-Aššur, possibly a colleague of Remanni-Adad's (NALK, nos. 303–18; SAA 6, nos. 221–38), which contains a judicial document mentioning a river ordeal alongside loan documents and sale texts: cf. Jas (1996), 73–4, no. 47. On the other hand, it is a fact that the remainder of the judicial texts coming from Nineveh are almost exclusively to be attributed to single-document dossiers (see Jas 1996, and cf. Kwasman 1986).

Such public environments are specifically characterized by a large presence of everyday documentation of official or collective scope (letters, administrative lists, memorandums, etc.). This material can be attributed to longer or shorter operational phases which on the one hand may span as much as two centuries (as at Nineveh and Kalḫu, all text groups considered) or on the other may be limited to a single situation or episode (as was suggested above for the older Guzana collection).

This distinctive distributional pattern of the clearly official documentation would seem to have some relation with the basically ephemeral character of the texts themselves, as is witnessed by a number of internal features, foremost of which is the prevalent lack of absolute chronological indications. The relation could be theorized as follows. The official documentation of the Neo-Assyrian empire would mostly have been stored as transient 'fonds d'archives', kept for the duration of a specific necessity/situation. The texts were subsequently discarded, but not necessarily destroyed outright, thus surviving in often coherent 'blocks' awaiting discovery by archaeologists.

More widely, then, there may be reason to distinguish two quite different habits or modes of text-collecting in the same general period: the assemblage of private business deeds, which give proof of having been locally stored over the span of a career or lifetime, or even over generations (such as the collections of Aššur-matu-taqqin and other Assur households or 'firms'), and the collection of official documents, where textual storage does not seem to carry over from one king to the next, and possibly neither from one bureau or 'operational centre' to the adjacent or temporally subsequent one. In brief, in the first case we would be dealing with what may be defined as a truly archival reality; while in the other no more than transitory 'fonds d'archives' may be posited, if even that, on many occasions. In this light, the contrast of the latter situation with the careful treatment and long-term preservation of literary and scientific documents in the libraries of the very same public buildings may be pointed out as particularly striking.

We are thus left with a final issue which has been raised more than once in the course of this article. What was the archival status of the private collections of legal documents discovered in the context of public buildings? On the basis of the evidence discussed above, the following points may be noted. Whether a professional connection

of all principals to their respective institutions was involved or not, it is a fact that no social distinctions seem to have determined the selection of these deeds: at Kalḫu, for example, the legal texts of the governor's brother or eunuch come down to us from the same settings as those of the rank and file. Chronologically, such deeds appear to be distributed much more evenly than the official documents: for example, while the Kuyunjik collection lacks any letters and administrative texts from Sennacherib's reign, some deeds dating from this period are preserved, as in the case of Bahiānu's loan contracts. Finally, the geographical range of the deeds is certainly quite vast at times, even spanning different provinces of the empire, as noticed for the dossier of Remanni-Adad.

With these data at hand, I propose the following hypothesis: that the Neo-Assyrian palatial bureaux could have gathered or reclaimed all sales and loan documents of their dependants—or, more widely, of their local constituency—in view of the management of the relevant assets *after the death* of the owners/creditors named in the texts. To be sure, it is not at present possible to summon any clear-cut piece of evidence to support this suggestion, from which, moreover, further questions would ensue: for example, whether the texts would have been collected during the principals' lifetime or posthumously, and whether the aim of the operation was to safeguard the legitimate heirs' interests, or to reclaim the assets as state property and thereupon redistribute them. On the other hand, it may be noted that this hypothesis offers an eminently practical framework to account for the scope of the vast collections of private business deeds retrieved in public buildings. It would also justify to a large extent not only the chronological and geographical characteristics of the collected texts, but also the presence of unsealed copies, as presumably part and parcel of the original collections. Finally, it would also help to explain why 'unnecessary' additional materials (such as business correspondence etc.) could have been expunged in the transition from privately held to publicly kept archives.

I leave this hypothesis for the consideration of students of the Neo-Assyrian period. In general, it may be said that at present we have only just begun to create a historical-archival framework for the Neo-Assyrian period, especially as far as the practical, everyday, type of documentation is concerned, in a curiously inverse relationship with the considerable amount and variety of textual data that

we possess from this age. It would seem that truly archival policies may be reconstructed for private legal documents, stemming not only from the local cache of family deeds but perhaps also from the public bureaux of the palace. On the other hand, only very short-range collection and storage interests would seem to have governed other categories of everyday documents of official scope, in contrast to the thorough conservation policies applied to contemporaneous 'library' materials. Undoubtedly, much work is still necessary to refine these initial and provisional perspectives, on which our over-all perception of later Assyrian history may depend to a certain extent. More modestly, it is to be hoped that the reflections and observations provided above may contribute to future discussion and work on the textual finds of the palaces of Nineveh, which, in their archaeologically 'silent' jumble, still represent a critical mass that fuels Neo-Assyrian research some 150 years after the first discoveries.

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10

Aramaic Documents of the Assyrian and Achaemenid Periods

ALAN MILLARD

Archives of Aramaic documents from the ninth to the fourth centuries BC are few and some of them very meagre; in effect, the topic deals with what does not exist as much as with what does. The geographical span is large, from Iran to Egypt, and so much of the material comes from bilingual or polyglot societies. In fact, there are no indigenous Aramaic archives. Aramaic graffiti and *bullae* bearing seals with names in Aramaic were discovered at Hamath on the Orontes, but the graffiti are on bricks and the *bullae* had sealed jars or packages, not written documents (Otzen 1990).

Aramean principalities arose in the tenth century BC, spread across Syria from the southern Lebanon and Damascus to Arpad and other towns north of Aleppo, across the Euphrates to the frontier with Assyria. Indeed, Aramean pressure had confined Assyria to a narrow territory along the Tigris for several decades until she regained her vigour about 925 BC and began to push them back or subjugate them. For the early period, until about 720 BC, the only Aramaic texts are stone monuments and a few inscribed objects. Most writing was done, assuming there were written deeds, letters, and administrative texts, on leather, papyrus, or wooden tablets covered with wax, which do not survive. The oldest comprehensible monument is the life-size statue of a king from Sikan (mod. Tell Fekheriyeh) on the Habur river in eastern Syria. It bears an Assyrian inscription in cuneiform on the front of the skirt and an Aramaic one on the back, the Aramaic being largely a translation of the Assyrian (Abou-Assaf, Bordreuil, and Millard 1982). This

Note. For bibliography see p. 238.

demonstrates an extensive interaction between the two languages in the mid-ninth century (Fales 1983), a situation also displayed by the use of Aramaic letters to set decorative bricks in order in the palace of the contemporary Šalmaneser III at the Assyrian capital Nimrud (Millard 1993: 35–6; Curtis, Collon, and Green 1993: 27). The symbiosis of Assyrian and Aramaic becomes more visible later in the eighth century. Assyrian wall sculptures and a wall painting depict pairs of scribes, one writing on a clay tablet or wax-covered boards, the other on a flexible sheet of leather or papyrus. These correspond to the textual references to Assyrian and Aramaic scribes.[1] The use of papyrus, leather, and wood means, again, that many documents have perished.

Several dozen examples of Aramaic writing from the late Assyrian period are known because the Aramaic characters were scratched on clay tablets.[2] They fall into two categories. The first comprises notes of identity. A legal deed was composed in Akkadian and written in cuneiform according to long-standing tradition. However, the populace was now so mixed that not all clerks could read cuneiform, so a short note was added on the edge of the tablet in Aramaic, to identify it, naming the property changing hands or the principals, sometimes adding details of money paid. This process is attested on tablets found at Nineveh, on some excavated at Dur-Katlimmu (mod. Tell Sheikh Hammad) on the Habur (Postgate 1993; Röllig 1993), and on some of unknown provenance. The practice continued after the fall of Assyria until the Seleucid period: nearly 200 examples are known. Adding notes to the hard clay surfaces of cuneiform tablets is attested long before. The El-Amarna archive of the fourteenth century BC provides several examples of Egyptian scribes adding ink-written notes in the hieratic script to cuneiform tablets, recording the dates when the letters they bear were received (cf. Moran 1992: nos. 23, 27, 254). However, in the Neo-Assyrian period the Aramaic texts were scratched or incised upon the tablets. Some letters show plainly the fibres of a stylus in a way which would be unlikely to appear if a dry surface had been moistened. It seems hardly possible that they were added after the clay tablets had hardened, i.e. more than a day or

[1] The scenes all concern the recording of enemies slaughtered or booty taken, so the men are not likely to be war artists.

[2] Fales (1986) includes the tablets from Niniveh, Assur, Nimrud, Tell Halaf, and unknown sites.

two after the cuneiform had been inscribed. On the other hand, in the next centuries, where the tablets of the Neo-Babylonian or Persian period carry Aramaic notes in ink, it is clear that they were written on the dry surface, although there is no way to discover whether that was done long after the cuneiform text had been completed, or within a few days. The notes were, again, clerical dockets to aid identification of documents in archives. Almost all of these later specimens are from sites in Babylonia; one small archive of 27 tablets dated to the reign of Nabonidus, found far to the west, at Neirab in Syria, includes five with similar Aramaic notes (Fales 1973).

The second category has the whole text in Aramaic, in a few cases parallel to an Akkadian one. These are legal deeds, too, in particular notes of debts in grain or silver. One group was excavated at Assur and its provenance carefully recorded. Three triangular corn loan-notes were found in the inner room of a private house with 21 cuneiform tablets, deeds of loan and a letter. They apparently belonged to one Assur-sallim-ahhe, whose name occurs as the creditor in all three of the Aramaic and four other documents which concern his affairs. Identical witnesses form another link between the Aramaic and the Assyrian texts.[3] At Guzana (mod. Tell Halaf) on the Habur a jar was unearthed which held six cuneiform and five Aramaic texts, all involving El-manani (Fales 1986: 239–52, nos. 53–7). Recent finds on the Habur and the middle Euphrates have added to these, Aramaic and cuneiform tablets being found together.[4] All of these documents belong to the seventh century BC. There is part of one dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the Louvre (Starcky 1960), but I am not aware of others wholly in Aramaic from the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods.

These texts display the need to label documents written in one language for identification by secretaries, or owners, using another language in the bilingual circumstances of Assyria and Babylonia. The tablets inscribed in Aramaic alone may result from scribes who needed to make a record in Aramaic lacking papyrus or leather writing material.

The Achaemenids found Aramaic widespread and made it their common administrative language.[5] While archives are still rare, there are some which provide much larger numbers of texts than are found in the previous eras. In the east, Persepolis yielded hundreds of tablets inscribed in Aramaic in the Fortification Archive. They remain unpublished, but it is known that they deal with wine rations and presumably reflect the same situations as the Elamite archives edited by R. T. Hallock (Hallock 1969: 82). Although perishable writing materials have not survived from this time in Turkey and the Levant, there are collections of *bullae* which prove they once existed, notably from Daskyleion and from the Jerusalem area (Balkan 1959; Avigad 1976). Collections of *bullae* with imprints of papyrus fibres on their backs testify to the former existence of documents, but they cannot reveal their number. In Egypt documents of this period usually carry a single *bulla*, but deeds in a different place could have up to seven *bullae* on each. Those are the 27 fragmentary papyri recovered from a cave to the west of the Jordan valley, in the Wadi Daliyeh, which became the final refuge for wealthy families fleeing Alexander's attack on Samaria. The papyri, still folded, their sealings with them, lay with the remains of their owners. They are legal documents about ownership of slaves or about administrative matters, dated between 375 and 335 BC. It is estimated that over 100 documents lay in the cave, and 128 *bullae* were recovered.[6]

It is from Egypt, storehouse of dehydrated antiquities, that the most extensive Achaemenid Aramaic archives have come. Foremost is the famous series of papyri from the Jewish and Aramean settlements at Elephantine and Aswan. Most of the papyri were found accidentally or by antiquity-hunters. Nevertheless, three archives can be partly reconstructed through the personal names and relationships, although it has to be recognized that what appear to be unrelated papers may have been held within these archives, as in archives of cuneiform texts; given the fragile nature of the papyri—some crumbled on exposure—we cannot assume that we have the complete content of any one of these archives. Especial notice should be given to the file of the leader of the Jewish community, Jedaniah ben Gemariah, perhaps a priest. These documents

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[3] For the provenance and grouping of these tablets and others from Assur see Pedersén (1986), 119–20 (N27); cf. 104–7 (N17, N18).

[4] Bordreuil and Briquel-Chatonnet (1996–7); Fales, Bachelot, and Attardo (1996); Röllig (1997).

[5] For texts in the following paragraphs, unless otherwise noted, see Fitzmyer and Kaufman (1991); the Aramaic papyri are re-edited in Porten and Yardeni (1986–93); for surveys see Porten (1992; 1997).

[6] Since this paper was prepared, these documents have been published in full: see Gropp 2001; for the *bullae* see Winn Leith (1997).

were excavated by a German team from a badly ruined house. The archive comprised letters by, to, or concerning Jedaniah and lists, legal documents, and two books. The last are the Words of Ahiqar and the Aramaic version of the Behistun Inscription of Darius the Great. All belong to the latter half of the fifth century.

Beside the papyri from Elephantine, attention should be given to the ostraca, well over 300 in number. Once more, the majority await publication. These ostraca are valuable because they complement the papyri. They reveal the day-to-day communications insufficiently important to commit to papyrus, sent by workmen at Syene on the shore of the Nile to relatives and colleagues on the island of Elephantine. Potsherds cost nothing; the messages could be read, action taken, or their information transferred to ledgers and other rolls, then they could be discarded. Some are notes requesting the dispatch of food or clothes, or giving information, others are lists of names.

Collections of Aramaic papyri discovered elsewhere in Egypt can hardly be classed as archives. The hoard of fourteen letters which the Persian governor of Egypt, Arsames, sent from Babylon to his officials constitute a postal package rather than an archive, found in their postbag. We note that they are written on leather, rather than papyrus, which was probably not easily obtained in fifth-century Babylon. Neither do the eight papyrus letters from Hermopolis qualify, for they too seem to be a mislaid file. The 202 very fragmentary papyri from Saqqara were dumped with other rubbish by later occupants of the site and no archives can be reconstituted from them (Segal 1983).

Scribes in Assyria and Babylonia added notes in Aramaic to cuneiform tablets to aid identification, and scribes writing on papyrus or leather added notes on the outside of the folded documents for the same purpose. The oldest Aramaic papyrus is the right half of a letter from Adon, ruler of a city on Philistia, perhaps Ekron, to the pharaoh at the end of the seventh century BC. On the back of the papyrus is half a line in Egyptian demotic script. Although difficult to read, it seems to be a note identifying the letter's origin, and would have been visible when the papyrus was folded (Porten 1981). The same sort of note in demotic occurs on two of the leather letters sent by Arsames from Babylon to Egypt, in both cases placed beside the Aramaic address on the back. Others of these letters, and some of the Elephantine papyri, carry short notes in Aramaic char-

acterizing their contents, written in different hands from the letters and their addresses, evidently, again, notes for identification.[7]

The Elephantine find also illustrates well one fate of ancient archival documents on leather or papyrus. A lengthy papyrus account, perhaps originally in 21 columns, of customs payments on shipping for 475 BC survives because, when its purpose was fulfilled, it was reused for a quite different composition, a text of interest to someone at Elephantine and of importance today, the Wisdom of Ahiqar (Yardeni 1994). The fact that it is written over the customs account suggests that it was a private copy. On the other hand, the papyrus containing the Aramaic version of Darius the Great's Behistun inscription, with additional material, was turned over and used for an accountancy text. The earliest dated entry in it is 417 BC, leading its latest editor to wonder whether the Darius text was copied shortly before to mark the centenary of Darius' victories and provide an example for the new king, Darius II (423–405 BC) (Porten and Yardeni 1986–93: iii., 59). In contrast to the Ahiqar roll, therefore, this is likely to have been a formal production on a new papyrus.

The final examples of Aramaic archives are more ostraca. Three groups have come to light in southern Palestine. Excavations at Tel Arad produced 85, only 45 of them legible, deposited in refuse pits scattered over the site. They deal with issues of grain for small numbers of donkeys and single horses, in at least seventeen cases at the request of or from the hand of one man, Yaddua'. It is suggested that these notes are remnants of the supply system for travellers on official errands. The palaeography indicates a date late in the fifth century BC. Excavations at Tel Beersheba produced 66 ostraca, again from rubbish pits. They are receipts for amounts of grain, probably paid as tax, some dated by day, month, and (regnal) year and assigned to the fourth century. Hundreds more ostraca appeared on the antiquities market in the late 1980s and were acquired by the Israel Museum and private collectors.[8] Most have three or four lines of cursive writing, noting amounts of grain, flour, oil, and wine, occasionally with other commodities, issued by one man to another on a specific day of a month of a regnal year. The years range from the 42nd year of Artaxerxes II (363 BC) to either the 5th

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[7] Whitehead (1978), especially 'Appendix. Notations in Demotic and Aramaic on the Arsames Correspondence' (pp. 136–40).

[8] See Lemaire (1996); Eph'al and Naveh (1996); Lozachmeur and Lemaire (1996).

year of Alexander IV (311 BC) or the 5th year of Philip Arrhideus
(318 BC), the difference depending upon whether or not the Mace-
donian dating system was followed after Alexander's conquest. It
is easy to imagine a clerk collecting the ostraca in a basket at the
end of a day or a week and transcribing the entries into a papyrus
ledger, like those from Elephantine, then dumping the sherds in a
rubbish pit. These are humble relics of an extensive bureaucracy
devouring metres of papyrus monthly, all now lost.

These Aramaic archives surviving from a period of four cen-
turies display the continuing traditions of preserving some records
and of jettisoning others. The ephemeral were usually discarded;
when unimportant ones seem to have been kept, that is probably as
much our misunderstanding as ancient inconsistency. Deeds that
gave title to property or proved ownership of a debt were valuable
and so guarded. From the sparse evidence available, it appears that
private and official documents were not separated, and the Jewish
leader's Elephantine archive shows that works of literature could
also be housed with deeds and letters, as had long been done in the
cuneiform-using cultures. No clear signs of organization by date,
category, or language are found, although preservation of what ap-
pear to be copies or drafts of a petition may show a basic concern
to keep records of important documents. The range of dates in the
Assyrian and Elephantine texts shows that the archives covered the
last decades of life at the site, two or three generations, perhaps as
much as a century. We can safely assume that older files were de-
stroyed, unless they contained papers of especial importance such
as deeds proving ownership of property (cf. Millard 1997).

Long-standing West Semitic terms were used to describe some
of the Aramaic papyri: *s^epar*, *k^eṯaḇ*, both meaning 'written text'
of almost any sort. More specific is *zikrôn* 'memorandum', a spe-
cial use of the word for 'memorial, memory'. West Semitic writ-
ing practices imported into Mesopotamia brought *m^egillâ* 'scroll'
into Akkadian, attested in the Neo-Babylonian period, and perhaps
nibzu 'document', occurring from Neo-Assyrian times. In the op-
posite direction, Assyrian loanwords appear in the seventh-century
Aramaic texts on clay tablets, *dannâ* 'a document in force, valid
deed',[9] *igg^era* 'document, letter', while *š^eṭar* 'a writing', *ṭ^eem* 'an

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[9] Found on the tablets of the Assyrian period; thereafter the only possible occur-
rence is in Porten and Yardeni (1986–93), ii. 54–7, n. 3. 1, l. 23, where identification
is disputed; see Hoftijzer and Jongeling (1995), 256–7.

order' appear in the Achaemenid period, as do Persian loanwords:
pitgam, OP **pati-gama* 'message, decree', *ništ^ewān*, OP **nistavan*
'report, order, document', and *paršegen*, OP **pati-agna* 'copy', in-
dicating a need for more specific terms than Aramaic owned.

Some of these terms also occur in a group of Aramaic docu-
ments which do not form an archive, but which deserve attention
as relics of archives and for the information they offer about archive-
keeping. This is the group of seven documents in the biblical book
of Ezra, ostensibly belonging to the fifth century. As more than
one study has demonstrated, these texts conform closely to the pat-
terns and styles of those now available in original manuscripts of
the Persian period (especially de Vaux 1972). Although there is
a current fashion in biblical studies to set aside the witness of any
biblical text unless there is independent corroboration of the events
they describe, there is no objective reason to doubt that these Ezra
documents are accurate reproductions of genuine products of the
Achaemenid chanceries. The fact that the letter of Artaxerxes I
prescribing Ezra's task in Jerusalem (Ezra 7: 11–26) includes de-
tails about the offerings and personnel of the Jewish cult and lists
considerable gifts from the Persian exchequer should not lead it
to be treated as Jewish propaganda when a comparable attitude is
found in a contemporary monument such as the trilingual Xanthos
stele permitting the establishment of a local cult on a much smaller
scale.[10] That stele with its petition in Greek and Lycian and the
satrap's response in Aramaic doubtless reproduces on stone docu-
ments preserved in the local archives on perishable materials. If the
extreme scepticism which some express about the Ezra texts were
applied in other areas or periods of ancient history, large sections
would become blank, for we often rely on a single source or, as
with Ezra, copies of copies of ancient sources. Ezra reports how,
when the Jews were rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, the gov-
ernor of the province of Abr-Nahrain wrote to Darius (I) to ask if
this was permitted, as they claimed Cyrus had decreed it should
be (Ezra 5: 6–17). The letter ends 'let search be made in the royal
treasury in Babylon, to discover whether a decree was issued by
King Cyrus for the rebuilding' (Ezra 5: 17). Darius instituted an
inquiry and, after a fruitless search in Babylon, 'there was found
in Ecbatana, in the royal residence in the province of Media, a
scroll on which was written the following memorandum', the text

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[10] Metzger, Laroche, Dupont-Sommer, and Mayrhofer (1979).

of Cyrus' decree (Ezra 6: 1–5). We note that the document recovered is called a 'scroll' and that Cyrus' decree was preserved in it as a 'memorandum', evidently one item among several, possibly a collection of royal edicts. Further opposition arose in the reign of Artaxerxes I (464–424 BC), when a letter was sent to warn him that the Jews, who were building again, had always been troublesome to previous kings: 'you will discover by searching the records that this has been a rebellious city' (Ezra 4: 15). The king replied that the records showed the assertion was true (Ezra 4: 17–22). In both cases, therefore, records of earlier reigns were stored and accessible, according to the narrator.[11] The Ezra documents employ the terms already noted, including *paršegen* 'copy', in contexts which make it clear that duplicates of official letters sent to Persia were available for consultation.

Again, we are dealing with crumbs from a once large cake, sufficient crumbs to show that the cake was rich and varied.

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[11] See previously Greenfield (1986), esp. 290.

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11

Record-Keeping Practices as Revealed by the Neo-Babylonian Private Archival Documents

HEATHER D. BAKER

1. Introduction

This paper examines Neo-Babylonian record-keeping practices in the private sphere with a view to improving our understanding of how family archives were accumulated. Recent studies of Neo-Babylonian archival material demonstrate how the study of an archive's composition can contribute to its historical interpretation.[1] However, there has been no attempt specifically to describe the 'rules' governing the writing and transmission of documents at this period. This involves addressing questions of why tablets were written, and for whose benefit; what form they took; why they were kept by one party or transferred to another; and how they were invalidated or superseded. To this end I first focus briefly on tablet format. The main part of the paper is concerned with the native terminology relating to record-keeping practices, i.e. with those formulae found in the legal contracts which refer to documents, and with the specific terms and phrases used to describe documents according to their format or subject matter.

The study is based on Babylonian private archival material from

[1] e.g. van Driel (1989a); Joannès (1989); Wunsch (1993).

the Neo-Babylonian to the early Achaemenid period, i.e. the late seventh century down to 482 BC.[2] The major private archives in question are those of the Egibi (perhaps more than 2,000 tablets), Nappāḫu (275 tablets), and Sîn-ilī (*c.*157 tablets) families. A number of smaller groups have also been identified (van Driel 1989a: 114–15). All of these archives were recovered through illicit excavation, though the Egibi archive is reported to have been found in jars (Walker 1980). They have therefore to be reconstructed on the basis of their contents, and the history of their dispersal following their appearance on the antiquities market.[3] We have no direct information about the way in which the archives were physically organized and stored while they were in use.[4]

The types of transaction recorded on clay tablets at this period are numerous. Alongside large numbers of promissory notes and receipts we find sales of real estate, slaves, temple prebends, and asses; exchanges of property; leases of houses, arable land, orchards, and prebends; apprentice contracts; manumissions; adoptions; 'testaments' and divisions of inheritance; the founding and dissolution of business (*ḫarrānu*) ventures; marriage agreements and gifts, receipts and conversions of dowry property, etc.

Whatever form they took, private archival documents were written and kept primarily as proof that an obligation existed, or had been discharged, or as evidence of title to property.[5] These objectives provide the motivation not only for the writing of tablets, but also for their transfer from one party to another in certain circumstances. As in earlier periods, records documenting the previous owner's acquisition of property (and often preceding chains of transmission too) were routinely handed over when property was transferred.[6] These 'deeds' or 'retroakts' may include not only previous records of purchase, but also dowry texts, records of inheritance division, and any other document relevant to the history of that property—hence we are relatively well informed about

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[2] For an overview of the Neo-Babylonian archives in general see Kessler (1991), 3–9; Pedersén (1998), 181–213.

[3] Facilitated by the work of van Driel (1986; 1989a) and Reade (1986).

[4] See Veenhof (1986b), 13 ff., for filing practices attested in Mesopotamia.

[5] See Van de Mieroop (1997) on the question of why tablets were written.

[6] This practice is well attested for the Old Babylonian period, for which see Charpin (1986). His observations have since been supplemented by recent research into the archives found in the House of Ur-Utu at Tell ed-Dēr. See Van Lerberghe and Voet (1991); Janssen, Gasche, *et al.* (1994); Janssen (1996).

family affairs at this period. In the case of a dispute over property, the judges would have a scribe write a tablet recording the outcome, which the victor would then keep as evidence of title.[7] Tablets could also be produced in court as evidence in the event of a claim.[8] These facts presuppose that record-keeping was a commonplace and routine activity among the urban propertied class;[9] indeed, many of the parties to the contracts were themselves literate.[10]

2. Tablet Format and Preparation

Contracts of all types were supplied with the date (in the order month, day, regnal year, and king's name), place of writing, and name of the scribe. Note the reference in OECT 12 AB 253 to tablets placed in a kiln (for baking); the tablets listed there include five concerning land which was under dispute.[11] It is not possible to determine the type of contract from the appearance of the tablet alone, because the tablets can be divided into only two types, ordinary tablets and formal *Ziegelformat* tablets, neither of which was reserved for a single contract type.[12]

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[7] e.g. *Nbn* 1128. 26–8: *a-na la e-né-e* ᴸᵁ*sar-te-nu u* ᴸᵁDI.KU₅ᴹᴱˢ *ṭup-pi iš-ṭu-ru-ma ina* ᴺᴬ⁴KIŠIBᴹᴱˢ*-šú-nu ib-ru-mu-ma a-na* PN *id-di-nu* 'so that it (i.e. the decision) should not be changed, the *sartennu* and judges wrote a tablet and sealed it with their seals and gave it to PN' (collated; cf. *Cyr* 128. 13–19). Wunsch (1997–8) has been able to put together a number of 'dossiers' of tablets relating to specific lawsuits.

[8] *Nbn* 1128. 7–12: *ú-il-ti šá* PN1 AD *šá* PN2 *šá* UGU PN3 AD *šá* PN4 *šá* É-*su maš-ka-nu ṣa-ab-tu₄ ma-ḫar-šú-nu iš-tas-su-ú* ᴸᵁ*sar-te-nu u* ᴸᵁDI.KU₅ᴹᴱˢ *rik-su u i-da-tu₄ šá e-ṭe-ru šá* PN4 *i-ri-šu-ma la ub-lu* 'they had read out before them the *u'iltu* of PN1 father of PN2, the debt of PN3 father of PN4, for which his house was taken as security; the *sartennu* and judges asked for PN4's agreement and signs of payment, but he did not bring (them)' (collated).

[9] This is borne out by the way in which certain paragraphs (5, 6, 8, 9) of the Neo-Babylonian Laws refer to written documents as though their production was very much routine. Note that paragraph 9 allows for the possibility of a spoken agreement about a dowry: LÚ *šá nu-dun-nu-ú a-na* DUMU.MUNUS*-šú iq-bu-ma lu-ú ṭup-pi iš-ṭu-ru-šú* . . . 'The man who promised his daughter a dowry or wrote it in a tablet for her'. For a recent translation of the Neo-Babylonian Laws see Roth (1995), 143–9.

[10] See Wunsch (1993), 73–5; Stolper (1993), 31.

[11] The text has been edited by Joannès (1990a), 24–5. I am grateful to M. Jursa for drawing my attention to this document.

[12] With the exception of *lē'u* (4. 5) and *taḫsistu* (*ša ana*) *lā mašê* (5. 1), the discussion

2.1. *Ordinary (unsealed) tablets*

The vast majority of private contracts were inscribed on pillow-shaped tablets, i.e. pieces of clay which are wider than they are high, with two convex surfaces. The tapering edges, upper, lower, left, and right, could also be inscribed. The contract formula was written on the obverse, continuing over the lower edge and onto the reverse if necessary, and was followed on the reverse by the list of witnesses, the scribe, the place, and the date formula. Occasionally the date formula was followed by an additional clause or by the name of a further witness. One or more lines of text could be continued onto the left edge if the scribe ran out of space on the reverse. Tablets of this type were very rarely sealed, though in the later years of Darius I a number of examples are known.[13]

2.2. Ziegelformat *tablets*

Sealed tablets (and copies of them) are distinguished from the bulk of the private archival texts by virtue of their shape.[14] They are rectangular in form with flat edges (*Ziegelformat*), and are nearly always oriented 'portrait' (short edges at top/bottom). On the reverse the end of the main text was marked by a clause between horizontal rulings which introduced the witness list. The tablets may bear seal impressions with captions, or captions alone, or simply nail-marks; alternatively, the edges may be left completely blank. Usually only one copy was sealed. This format of tablet was used in particular for the recording of real-estate transactions,[15] but also for court records and other transactions which necessitated a formal treatment.[16] Such tablets were carefully prepared

here is confined to contract tablets; it excludes letters and administrative documents from the private archives.

[13] See Oelsner (1978) for an overview of sealing practices in Babylonia in the first millennium BC.

[14] Cf. the contrast made by Postgate (1986), 11, between Neo-Assyrian 'contracts' and 'conveyance' tablets, which are similarly distinguishable by their physical appearance (although unlike their Neo-Babylonian counterparts, the Neo-Assyrian contracts were encased in envelopes). See also Radner (1995).

[15] See now Wunsch (2001), a study of land-sale and related contracts from the Egibi archive.

[16] In fact certain kinds of transaction, such as some dowry conversion texts, could be written on tablets of this format but were never sealed (this observation was made to me by C. Wunsch).

and well-written by one of a restricted group of professional notaries.[17]

2.3. *Other formal characteristics*

Envelopes are practically unknown among private archival documents at this period.[18] Occasionally markings, meaningful or otherwise, are attested on the tablets. *Dar* 134, concerning a *ḫarrānu* venture, has the sign KASKAL written twice on the left edge. Markings of an indeterminate nature are found on VS 4. 62. A couple of tablets have lines scored on one or more edges,[19] and drawings made with the point of a reed stylus also occur very occasionally.[20] Textile impressions are found on a very small number of tablets.[21] Whether these were caused by having been wrapped in cloth while not yet dry, or by accidental contact with clothing, is unclear.[22] Aramaic notations are very rare among the private archival texts from Babylon of this period,[23] compared with the later fifth

[17] Baker and Wunsch (2001); note that court records were written by an even smaller group of specialist notaries (Wunsch 2000).

[18] See Jursa (1998), 113, for examples. Cf. the regular use of envelopes for Neo-Assyrian contracts (Postgate 1986: 13; Radner 1997: 25–7).

[19] BM 32883 (scored once along top edge, three times along left edge); BM 41444 (scored along four edges).

[20] e.g. VS 4 84 (bird?, left edge); 151 (geometric, lower obv.); 5 35 (human figure, upper edge); 64 (geometric, left edge); 82 (geometric, left edge); 131 (geometric, upper edge); 6 97 (human figure and marks, left edge); 104 (tree? next to sealing, lower obv.); 291 (bird, rev.). All of these examples, excepting the last mentioned, come from the Nappāḫu archive. The tablets VS 5 64, 82, and 131, which bear very similar geometric drawings, are leases, probably all of the same house. The number of drawings on tablets of the Nappāḫu archive is noteworthy. Although the copies made by Strassmaier, among which the majority of published Egibi tablets are found, do not show such features (unlike the copies of Ungnad in VS 3–6, which do), the fact that no such examples have been observed in the course of collating a great many Egibi tablets, published and unpublished, suggests that the distinction between the two archives in this respect is a real one. According to Ungnad's copies, drawings are not found on tablets of the Sîn-ilī archive.

[21] See Weszeli and Baker (1997), no. 10. Other examples include BM 30440 (on upper obv.); 30878 (lower edge); 33969 (rev.).

[22] These impressions are not to be confused with the deliberately made hem impressions found in place of sealings on some earlier tablets (see *CAD* s.v. *sissiktu* b for Mari, Old Babylonian, and Middle Babylonian examples; also Teissier 1994: 10; 239, nos. 673–5). They are too irregularly made, in the wrong position, and are never identified with an individual by means of a *Siegelvermerk*.

[23] See Weszeli and Baker (1997), no. 10. A second Egibi tablet, *Dar* 350, also bears an Aramaic notation (not indicated on Strassmaier's copy), as does VS 4 143 (Nappāḫu archive).

century BC, when they are not uncommonly attested on tablets of the Murašû[24] and Kaṣr archives (cf. Jacob-Rost and Freydank 1972).

2.4. *Duplicates*

A brief word about duplicate tablets is in order; the subject certainly deserves more attention than can be devoted to it here. The preparation of multiple copies of a single contract may be attested by a number of means: the use of the clause *ištenâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* (3.2)[25] or the term *gabrû/gabrānû* (4.1); the presence of the phrase *ḫīpi (eššu)* meaning '(new) break';[26] and, of course, the actual recovery of multiple exemplars. In fact, multiple copies are surely under-represented among the extant tablets, because in a great many instances they would have ended up in different archives, and it is only very rarely the case that we have the holders of different archives acting together in the extant documentation.

In certain circumstances the need would arise to prepare multiple copies of a document, all equally valid. For example, in the case of a division of inheritance between three parties, one can envisage that each party required a valid document in order to demonstrate their title to their specific portion of the estate. Conversely, consider the individual who inherits three different pieces of property. Should he wish to sell one of these, he cannot pass on his original inheritance document, as he would then retain no proof of title to his remaining two properties; a copy of the original would therefore have to be prepared for the buyer. As far as record-keeping practices are concerned, it is impossible to determine whether a duplicate was prepared at the time of the original transaction or later, except when the phrase *ḫīpi (eššu)* is present, indicating a copy made from an older, damaged original. Finally, it should be noted that documents were no doubt copied in the course of scribal training, and that some of the

[24] e.g. Donbaz and Stolper (1997), nos. 38, 39, 43, 44, 60, 65, etc.

[25] These parenthetical references are to the numbered sections below.

[26] For example, three tablets from the Nappāḫu archive can be identified as copies of a damaged original: *Nbk* 247, *Nbk* 416, and BM 77555+77792. The tablets are retroakts to a prebend transaction; the original is not extant. For further discussion of these tablets and editions see Baker (forthcoming).

resulting duplicates may well have found their way into private archives.[27]

3. The Formulae

The formulae of the Neo-Babylonian legal contracts have been amply studied from a legal-historical point of view.[28] Here I draw attention to those formulae which have a direct bearing on record-keeping. The subheadings in this section give generic examples of these clauses; numerous variants of the formulae actually occur, reflecting differences in orthography and/or the specific circumstances of the contract.

3.1. *elât u'ilti maḫrīti* 'apart from the earlier *u'iltu*'

In a promissory note the *elât* clause is used to protect the creditor by expressly excluding any existing obligation(s) between the two parties from being counted as part of the current obligation (Petschow 1956: 17–18). The document term normally used here is *u'iltu* (4.10).[29] A variant of the clause in receipt documents refers instead to previous receipts (*giṭṭu*, 4.2).[30] The *elât* clause may contain further details of the previous obligation(s),[31] sometimes giving sufficient information to enable identification of the actual tablet(s) referred to.

3.2. *ištenâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* 'each (party) has taken a document'

This clause was frequently added to documents, either at the end of the contract formula or after the date formula. The document

[27] See now Jursa (1999), 13–31, for the evidence for scribal training in the tablets from the archive of Bēl-rēmanni from Sippar.

[28] See especially Petschow (1939; 1954; 1956; 1959); Ries (1976).

[29] e.g. *Cyr* 83. 6–7: *e-lat ú-il-tiMEŠ* IGI-*tu,* 'excluding the earlier promissory notes'.

[30] e.g. *Nbn* 1091 (=CM 3b. 266), 6–7: *e-lat* GÍD.DAMEŠ IGIMEŠ 'excluding the earlier receipts' (cf. *Nbn* 531. 1–2; VS 3 85. 3; *Dar* 220. 1–2).

[31] e.g. *Cyr* 91. 6–8: *e-lat ú-il-ti šá* ⅓ (MA.NA) 8 GÍN *ù ú-il-ti šá* ˹1˺ GUR 1 ⟨PI⟩ 4 BÁN ZÚ.˹LUM.MA˺ *ù* 1 GUR 2 ⟨PI⟩ 3 BÁN ŠE.BAR 'excluding the promissory note for ⅓ (mina) 8 shekels (of silver) and the promissory note for 1 *kur* 1 ⟨*pān*⟩ 4 *sūt* of dates and 1 *kur* 2 ⟨*pān*⟩ 3 *sūt* of barley'.

term normally used is *šaṭāru* (4.7),[32] but *giṭṭu* is used to refer to receipts (4.2),[33] and *gabrû* (4.1) also occurs.[34] In fact, the clause is an abbreviation of the fuller, but more rarely used, phrase *ana lā enê ištenâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* 'so that it [the contract] should not be altered each party has taken a document'.[35] It is possible to discern two contexts in which the clause is found. It occurs, logically enough, in contracts which were of continuing relevance to both parties, such as leases of property, apprentice contracts, and contracts of property exchange (see *ṭuppi šupêlti*, 4.6). The clause is also found on receipt documents of which copies were kept by the (ex-)creditor as well as the (ex-)debtor. The debtor required the receipt in order to demonstrate that he was no longer under obligation, but the payee could only have required a copy for bookkeeping purposes.[36]

3.3. *u'iltu maḫrītu ḫepât* 'the previous promissory note is broken'

This clause protects the debtor by confirming that any previous obligation against him has been broken, i.e. invalidated. The usual document term here is *u'iltu* (4.10),[37] but *giṭṭu* (4.2) may also be used.[38]

3.4. *gabrû . . . ša tella' ša PN šī* 'the copy . . . which turns up belongs to PN'

See *CAD* E 122–3 s.v. *elû* 2d; cf. also *CAD* A 24–5 s.v. *amāru* 7b. This clause is intended to ensure that, when a piece of property

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[32] e.g. *Nbk* 334. 19: 1 TA.ÀM *šá-ṭa-ra-nu il-qu-ú*; *Dar* 551. 17: 1+en TA.ÀM *šá-ṭa-ri [il-qu]-ú*.

[33] e.g. *Nbn* 827. 7–8: 1+en TA.ÀM GÍD.DA MEŠ *il-qu-ú*; *Camb* 279. 10–11: 1+en-a TA.ÀM GÍD.DA MEŠ *il-te-qu-ú*.

[34] e.g. *Cyr* 128. 26: *a-na la e-né-e gab-ra-né-e il-te-qu-ú* 'So that it [the agreement] should not be altered they have (both) taken copies.'

[35] See the example cited in the preceding footnote.

[36] For example, in the Nappāḫu archive the clause is attested in receipts for house rent received by Iddin-Nabû from tenants (*VS* 4 106; 110; 129; 138; 146; 182); it is *not* found in receipts for payment received *from* members of the archive-holding family.

[37] e.g. *Nbk* 42, left edge: *ú-il-ti-šú maḫ-ri-ti ḫe-pa-a-ti* 'His earlier promissory note is broken'; *Nbk* 116. 11–12: *ú-il-ti* (MEŠ) *ana MU-šú-nu [maḫ-r]e-e-ti ḫu-up-pa-'* 'The earlier promissory notes in their names are broken'. Cf. *Nbk* 60. 6–7; 72. 18–19; *Nbn* 311. 8; 587. 5–6; 605. 9–10.

[38] e.g. *TCL* 13 160. 13: GÍD.DA-*ni-šú-nu ḫu-up-pu-ú* 'Their documents are broken' (cf. *Camb* 281. 8 (Sippar text); BM 77392=*BR* 2 61).

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changes hands, any previous tablets relating to it belong to (or will be given to) the new owner.[39] It guards against the possibility of a previous owner or creditor raising a claim on the basis of a deed which has not been handed over. Variants of the clause stipulate that the tablets which turn up shall be broken (cf. 3.3),[40] or shall be considered paid.

3.5. *u'ilti* PN1 *kî utirri ana* PN2 *ittadin* 'PN1 has returned the *u'iltu* to PN2'

When an obligation has been discharged or superseded, the presence of this clause[41] or a phrase of similar import[42] indicates that

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[39] In real-estate transactions: e.g. Sack, *AM* 14. 18–21: GABA.RI IM DUB *ù lu-ú rik-si šá A.Š[À] šu-a-tì šá ina É* ʾPN1 *ù lu-ú ina É* DUMU MEŠ *šá* PN2 *šá* PN3 PN4 *u* PN5 *šu-ú* 'The copy of the tablet or contract concerning that field which (turns up) in the house of ʾPN1 or in the house of the sons of PN2 belongs to PN3, PN4, and PN5': *Nbn* 85 (=CM 3b 109), 12–14: *u₄-mu* GABA.RI *ku-nu-uk ma-ḫi-ri lu-ú mim-ma ri-ik-su šá É šu-a-tì ina É* PN1 *lu-ú ina a-šar šá-nam-ma it-tan-ma-ru šá* PN2 *u* ʾPN3 *šu-ú* 'If a copy of the sealed sale document or any contract concerning that house is seen in the house of PN1 or in any other place, it belongs to PN2 and ʾPN3' (cf. Sack, *AM* 21. 27–8; *Dar* 571. 8–10).

In slave transactions: e.g. *Ner* 1. 15–19: *ina u₄-mu ú-il-tì lu* GABA.RI *ú-i[l-ti] šá* PN1 DAM-*šú u* DUMU.MUNUS-*šú ina É* PN2 *u* LÚ *Ḫar-ra-na-a-a [ta-a]t-tan-ma-ru šá* PN3 *u* PN4 *ši-[i]* 'If an *u'iltu* or copy of an *u'iltu* concerning (the slaves) PN1, his wife, and his daughter is seen in the house of PN2 or the man of Ḫarrān, it belongs to PN3 and PN4'; *BRM* 1 51. 14–15: *lu-ú ú-il-tì lu-ú rik-su šá* ʾPN1 *šá ina É* PN2 *il-la-'* šá PN3 *šu-ú* 'The *u'iltu* or contract concerning (the slave) ʾPN1 which turns up in the house of PN2 belongs to PN3' (cf. Mold 1. 12 (=Delaunay 1977: 4–9), 12–15; *Nbn* 832. 12–15).

In other transactions: *Nbk* 320. 9–13: *ú-il-ti* MEŠ *ma-la ba-šu-ú šá* PN1 *šá muḫ-ḫi* PN2 *ù* PN3 AD-*šú šá ina É* PN1 *šá il-la-a-nu šá* PN2 *ši-na* 'The promissory notes, as many as there are of PN1 against PN2 and PN3 his father which turn up in the house of PN1, they belong to PN2'; cf. *Nbk* 69. 9–10; 141. 19–21; Mold 1 12. 12–15; *Dar* 174 (=CM 3b 351), 9–14.

[40] e.g. *Nbk* 172. 14–17: *ú-il-tì* MEŠ *šá* UGU PN1 PN2 PN3 *u* PN4 *šá ina É* PN5 *šá il-la-a-nu ḫu-up-pa-'* 'The promissory notes against PN1, PN2, PN3, and PN4 which turn up in the house of PN5 shall be broken' (cf. *Nbk* 65. 7–8; 407. 6–8; *Cyr* 154. 6–10).

[41] e.g. CM 3b 170. 9–11: *ú-il-tì* PN1 *ki-i ú-tir-ri a-na* PN2 *it-ta-din* 'PN1 has returned the (original) promissory note to PN2'; the document also specifies (ll. 11–13) that any copy of it which turns up belongs to PN2; Sack, *AM* 14 16–18: IM DUB ʾPN1 *u* PN2 *a-na* PN3 PN4 *u* PN5 *ut-tir-ru-'* 'PN1 and PN2 have returned the tablet to PN3, PN4, and PN5'. Cf. *Nbn* 669 (=CM 3b 206), 9–11; 742. 6–9; *Dar* 287. 7–9.

[42] e.g. *Nbn* 59. 9–11: *mim-mu-u ú-il-tì šá* ŠÁM *ḫa-ri-iṣ šá ina* ŠU" PN1 *i-bu-ku a-na* PN2 *it-ta-din* 'Whatever document (there is) of the full purchase price (of the

the original promissory note or other relevant document has been handed over to the debtor. Other clauses stipulate that documents will be handed over in the future.[43]

3.6. *Purchase by proxy*

We are dealing here with a procedure rather than a formula; nevertheless, it is worth reviewing because it has a significant bearing on record-keeping practices. The procedure by which property was purchased by one party on behalf of another, with the latter's capital, has been elucidated by Petschow (1954). Briefly, the agent (PN1) had the purchase document drawn up in his own name (on its own, this is indistinguishable from any other purchase document); the true owner (PN2) then had a tablet drawn up stating that PN1 had purchased the property with PN2's capital, and had had the purchase document drawn up at PN2's behest, and that PN1 has no further share in the property. PN2 then kept both tablets (e.g. the pair *Dar* 465 and 467).

4. Terms for Documents

As well as the regular term for tablet, *ṭuppu*, a number of other terms for documents are used within the private archival texts: *gabrû, giṭṭu, kunukku, lē'u, riksu, šaṭāru, šipirtu,* and *u'iltu*.[44] With the exception of the *lē'u* ('writing-board') and *kunukku* ('sealed document'), these terms do not correspond to physical types which can be differentiated on the grounds of appearance. The usage of some of the terms overlaps, as we shall see; for the formulae in which they occur see Section 3 above.

slave woman) which he bought from PN1, he has given to PN2'. Cf. *Nbn* 126 (dupl. 274), 12–14; *Dar* 483. 4–11.

[43] e.g. *Nbk* 334. 16–17: ᴵᴹDUB-*šú-nu a-na* ᶠPN1 *u* ᶠPN2 *i-nam-din-ma ú-il-ti*ᴹᴱ-*šú i-na-áš-šú* 'He shall give their tablet to ᶠPN1 and ᶠPN2 and they shall bring his promissory notes'. Cf. *Nbk* 382. 19–23; Sack, *AM* 21 27–8; *Nbn* 609. 8–12; 715. 15–16; 720. 9; *Dar* 137. 8–10.

[44] San Nicolò (1948) discusses the use of different writing materials in the Neo- and Late Babylonian periods and the terminology involved; see Radner (1997), 19–66, on Neo-Assyrian document types and format.

4.1. *gabrû*, pl. *gabrānû* (GABA.RI and syllabic writings)

In our texts *gabrû* is used to denote an exemplar or copy of a tablet. The somewhat restricted occurrence of the term belies the frequency with which copies of tablets were actually made (see 2.4). The term *gabrû* is used especially in clauses intended to ensure that any previous tablets relating to a piece of property will be given to its new owner (3.4). *gabrû* is also very occasionally used in the clause indicating that both parties have taken a copy of a document (3.2).

4.2. *giṭṭu* (ᴵᴹGÍD.DA; syll.)

The writing ᴵᴹGÍD.DA has been read variously as *giṭṭu, imgiddû, liginnu, nibzu,* and *u'iltu*. Of these terms, *imgiddû* is not attested written syllabically in Neo- and Late Babylonian economic texts. *liginnu* usually refers to canonical texts, and is attested only in economic texts at this time in the context of reading a tablet aloud, with the specific sense of teaching or learning to read (and write) (*liginna šuqbû/liginna qabû*).[45] The term *nibzu* is restricted to Neo-Assyrian texts.[46] The most likely readings in our texts are, therefore, *giṭṭu* and *u'iltu*. Since the plural is occasionally written with the phonetic complement -*nu/ni*, the reading *giṭṭu/giṭṭānu* is indicated. This is supported by the syllabic writing *gi-iṭ-ṭa-nu* in VS 6 154. 6. The dictionaries give the following translations for *giṭṭu*: 'Quittung, Bescheinigung' (*AHw* s.v. *giṭṭu* 2); 'tablet containing a receipt or certificate' (*CAD* s.v. *giṭṭu* 2). They also suggest that a *giṭṭu* was a long tablet, i.e. higher than it was wide,[47] but this does not accord with the Neo-Babylonian private archival usage, since it refers to tablet types which were almost invariably oriented 'landscape' (long sides at top and bottom).

[45] Nabû-aḫḫē-iddin of the Egibi family claimed to have taught his adoptive son Kalbaya to read: *ultu ṣeḫiri urabbûšu u liginnu ušaqbûšu* 'from childhood he raised him and taught him to read' (Mold 1 21. 4–5; ed. Delaunay 1977: 42–3). The phrase *liginna šuqbû* also occurs in *YOS* 19 110. Beaulieu (1992) argues that this tablet involves an injunction preventing a named individual from disclosing the contents of the canonical texts to the temple oblates. A further, early Neo-Babylonian, attestation of the phrase *liginna qabû* has recently come to light: see Cole (1996), 177–9, no. 83. 14–15 and l. 47 with commentary.

[46] For a discussion of this term see Radner (1997), 30.

[47] 'Längliche Tafel' *AHw*, based on the Sumerian etymology of ᴵᴹGÍD.DA (lit. 'long tablet') and referring originally to a single-columned tablet which was oriented portrait.

Several usages of *gittu* may be differentiated: in place of *šaṭāru* in the phrase *ištēnâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* (3.2); in place of *u'iltu* in the *elât* clause (3.1); in the phrase 'according to the document of PN',[48] and in the context of handing over or showing a tablet.[49]

4.3. *kam/ngu, kanku*

See the discussion under *kunukku* (4.4).

4.4. *kunukku* ([NA4/IM]KIŠIB; syll.)

The term *kunukku* denotes a sealed document (as well as a seal). Owen and Watanabe (1983) argue, on the basis of syllabically written attestations, that [NA4/IM]KIŠIB is to be read *kamgu* (see *CAD* s.v. *kanku* (*kangu*); *AHw* s.v. *kanku*) rather than *kunukku*, and that [NA4]KIŠIB, [IM]KIŠIB, and *kamgu* were used interchangeably.[50] They also observe that the signs KIŠIB and DUB are not readily distinguishable in Neo-Babylonian documents, thus making it difficult to determine whether *kangu* or *ṭuppu* is intended. In the corpus of texts which the present study draws upon, the term *kangu* is not attested in syllabic writing, whereas the term *kunukku* is, in the clause 'if a copy . . . turns up' (3.4; see also *kunuk mahīri*, 5.3).

4.5. *lē'u* ([GIŠ]DA, [GIŠ]LE.U₅.(UM); syll.)

The use of wax-coated writing-boards in the first millennium BC has been examined by San Nicolò (1948).[51] As he observed, Neo-

Babylonian evidence for the use of writing-boards comes predominantly from the temple sphere, where they seem to have been used for registers of income and expenditure, and of prebendaries etc.;[52] examples of their use in the private sphere are very rare. Most of the references to writing-boards in the private archival texts from Babylon in fact concern temple writing-boards. There are a few exceptions to this: writing-boards are referred to in the context of settling accounts,[53] in place of *šaṭāru* in the phrase *ištēnâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* (3.2),[54] in a reference to the invalidation of documents following the winding-up of a *ḫarrānu* venture,[55] and in the *elât* clause (3.1).[56] These instances show that writing-boards *were* used in the private record-keeping context. Moreover, these particular writing-boards were referred to in ways normally reserved for contract tablets. However, their infrequent attestation compared with the other types of documents discussed here suggests either that their use was genuinely very restricted, or that it was confined to recording purposes which usually did not overlap with the functions fulfilled by clay tablets, so that there was very rarely any need even to refer to them.

4.6. *riksu* (syll.)

The word *riksu* was a generic term for 'agreement' or 'contract'. It occurs in the clause 'if a copy . . . turns up', both in the context

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[48] e.g. *Dar* 290. 2–7: *a-ki-i* GÍD.DA *šá* PN₁ PN₂ *ina* ŠU[II] PN₃ *a-na muḫ-ḫi* PN₄ *e-ṭir* 'According to the document of PN₁, PN₂ has been paid by PN₃ to the debit of PN₄' (cf. *Dar* 286. 1–7). Note also *Dar* 300. 2–5: *a-ki-i* GÍD.DA *u* [NA4]KIŠIB *šá* PN₁ *šá a-na* MU *šá* 'PN₂ *šaṭ*'-*ru* 'According to the sealed document of PN₁ which was written in the name of PN₂' (understanding the phrase *gittu u kunukku* as a hendiadys analogous to the use of *kunukku u šipirtu* (and vice versa): see Stolper 1985: 159–60).

[49] e.g. *VS* 6 154. 6–8: *gi-iṭ-ṭa-nu a-na-aš-šam-ma a-na* PN *ú-kal-la-mu* 'I shall bring the documents and shall show them to PN'. Cf. *Nbn* 722 (= CM 3b 215).

[50] The examples they cite are drawn from three well-attested phrases: (1) *ina kanāk kamgi šu'āti* '(present) at the sealing of that sealed tablet'; (2) (PN) *ṭupšarru šaṭir kamgi* '(PN) the scribe who wrote the sealed tablet'; (3) *supur* PN *kīma kamgišu* 'fingernail of PN in place of his seal'. I am grateful to M. Jursa for drawing this article to my attention.

[51] Since his study was published a number of Near Eastern examples have come to light through archaeological investigation (*RlA* iv. 458–9; see also Payton 1991

[52] Cf. Postgate (1986), 22–6, on the references to writing-boards in Middle Assyrian tablets, which attest to similar uses.

[53] e.g. *Nbn* 95. 4–6: PN₁ *i-na* [GIŠ]DA-*šú* 'NÍ'.KA₉ *it-ti* PN₂ *i-pu-uš* 'PN₁ in his writing-board made a settling of accounts with PN₂' (Sippar tablet); *TCL* 12. 43. 29–30: [GIŠ]LE.U₅[MEŠ] *ú-il-ti*[MEŠ] *u mim-mu-šú-nu* 'The writing boards, promissory notes, and whatever else of theirs'.

[54] *Cyr* 140. 7–8: [GIŠ]DA 1 + *en-*'*a₄*' *il-qu-ú*; see San Nicolò (1948), 61 n. 3.

[55] *TCL* 13 160. 12–13: *ú-il-ti*[MEŠ]-*šú-nu e-eṭ-ra-*' [GIŠ]LE.U₅.UM[MEŠ]-*šú-nu pu-uš-šu-ṭu* GÍD.DA-*ni-šú-nu ḫu-up-pu-ú* 'Their obligations are paid, their writing-boards are erased, their tablets are broken.'

[56] CM 3b 157. 5–8: *e-lat ú-il-ti*[MEŠ] GÍD.DA-*ni*[MEŠ] *ù te-lit-tu₄ šá muḫ-ḫi le-e šá* PN₁ *ù* 'PN₂ *ina muḫ-ḫi* PN₃ AD-*šú* 'Excluding the *u'ilēti*, the *gittānu*, and the *tēlītu* which is written on the writing-board of PN₁ and 'PN₂ against PN₃, his father'. Wunsch places this writing-board in the temple sphere; however, I believe that the context and phrasing suggest rather a private use.

of real-estate transactions in association with *kunukku/tuppu* and in slave transactions with *u'iltu* (see the examples cited in 3.4). The following citation, drawn from the record of a legal dispute, reveals a complex chain of transmission of tablets relating to a single slave:

ri-ka-su šá ÌR-*ú-tu šá* PN1 *šá ul-tu* MU.35.KAM ^{d+}AK-NÍG.DU-URÌ LUGAL TIN.TIR^{KI} *a-di* MU.7.KAM ^{d+}AK-I LUGAL E^{KI} *a-na* KÙ. BABBAR *na-ad-nu a-na maš-ka-nu šak-nu a-na nu-dun-né-e a-na* ʿPN2 DUMU.MUNUS-*su šá* ʿPN3 *na-ad-nu ár-ki* ʿPN2 *tak-nu-ku-šú-ma it-ti* GIŠ.ŠUB.BA É *ú a-me-lu-ut-ti a-na* PN4 DUMU-*šú u* PN5 *mu-ti-šú ta-ad-di-nu-uš iš-tas-su-ú-ma*. (*Nbn* 1113. 8–14)

They [the *sukkallu*, the elders and the judges of Nabonidus] had read out the contracts of servitude of PN1 (dating) from the 35th year of Nebuchadnezzar to the 7th year of Nabonidus; he had been sold, given as security, given as dowry to ʿPN2 daughter of ʿPN3, and later ʿPN2 sealed (a document) and gave him, together with a prebend, a house, and (other) slaves, to PN4 her son and PN5 her husband.

4.7. *šaṭāru*

The word *šaṭāru* is used as a generic term for 'document'. It occurs most commonly in the postscript *ištēnâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* (see 3.2). *šaṭāru* is also used in other contexts. In the case of purchase by proxy it may refer to a document drawn up (by the agent) at the behest of the purchaser (see 3.6).[57] It may also refer to a document which a party is required to produce,[58] and very occasionally there are references to scribes who drew up a document.[59]

4.8. *šipirtu* (syll.)

The term *šipirtu* was used for 'letter' or 'written authorization'. It occurs in the context of missives requesting action[60] or authorizing payment.[61]

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[57] e.g. *Dar* 467. 6–7: *šá-ṭa-ri a-na ṣe-bu-tú šá* PN *šá-ṭi-ir* 'A document was drawn up at the behest of PN'.

[58] e.g. *Nbn* 442. 1–10: *a-di qí-it šá* ^{IТI}DU6 ʿPN1 . . . *šá-ṭa-ri* . . . *ta-na-áš-šá-am-ma a-na* PN2 *ta-nam-din*-' 'By the end of Tašrītu ʿPN1 . . . shall bring the document . . . and shall give it to PN2'. Cf. *Dar* 338. 12–15.

[59] e.g. *Nbn* 633. 10–12: *ina ma-ḫar* PN1 *u* PN2 ^{LÚ}DUB.SAR^{MEŠ} *šá-ṭa-ru šá-ṭir* 'In the presence of PN1 and PN2, the scribes who drew up the document'.

[60] e.g. VS 5 20. 1–8: 1 ⟨PI⟩ 4 BÁN ^{ŠE}NUMUN *šá* PN1 *ina* ŠU^{II} PN2 *u* PN3 DUMU-*šú* KI.LAM *i-pu-uš-ú-ma ár-ki* PN2 *u* ʿPN4 *ši-pir-ta a-na* PN1 *u* PN5 ^{LÚ}DUB.SAR *iš-pur-ru-ú-ma um-ma* 2 BÁN ^{ŠE}NUMUN *ba-ab-tu* 2 PI ^{ŠE}NUMUN

4.9. *ṭuppu* (^{IM}DUB, IM (*passim* in letters), syll.)

ṭuppu was the general term for a clay tablet. In some cases it is clear from the context that the tablet in question was a sealed one (see the discussion under *kunukku*, 4.4).[62] *ṭuppu* may also be used to refer to tablets handed over by one party to another.[63]

4.10. *u'iltu* (syll.)

u'iltu is the most commonly occurring term for a written document at this period, normally with the sense of 'promissory note', 'obligation',[64] though it was also used for other types of contract.[65] The tablets referred to by this term are almost invariably oriented landscape, in contrast to sealed tablets (see 2.1). The term *u'iltu* occurs very frequently in the *elât* clause (3.1), referring to one or more unpaid obligation(s). A promissory note could be invalidated by being broken (3.3), by being returned to the debtor once a debt was paid (3.5), or by the writing of a document which superseded it, such as a receipt.[66] The testimony of earlier promissory notes

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i-na ^{IM}DUB-*i-ni šu-ṭur* '(Concerning) 1 *pān* 4 *sūt* of land which PN1 purchased from PN2 and PN3 his son, and later PN2 and ʿPN4 sent a letter to PN1 and PN5 the scribe, saying "2 *sūt* of land, the remainder of 2 *pān* of land, write it in our tablet!"'

[61] *Dar* 552. 5–9: *ina* ^{ITI}BARÁ *ši-pir-tu4 šá* PN1 *a-na* IGI PN2 *i-na-áš-am-ma* KÙ.BABBAR *a4* ⅓ *ma-na* 1 GÍN PN2 *a-na* PN3 *u* PN4 *i-nam-din* 'In Nisan he shall bring the written authorization of PN1 to PN2 and PN2 shall give ⅓ mina and 1 shekel of silver to PN3 and PN4'. Cf. *Dar* 573. 4–7; *Cyr* 29. 5–7.

[62] e.g. Sack, *AM* 21: 5–6: ^{IM}DUB *a-na* MU *šá* PN1 *ik-nu-uk-ku* 'They sealed a document in the name of PN1'; *EvM* 16. 13–14: PN1 *a-na* ^{LÚ}UMBISAG^{MEŠ} *šá* LUGAL *i-qab-bi-ma* ^{IM}DUB *i-kan-na-ku-ma a-na* PN2 *i-nam-din-nu* 'PN1 shall tell it to the scribes of the king and they shall seal a document and give it to PN2'. Cf. *EvM* 19. 14–16; 22. 15–17; *Nbn* 964. 7–8.

[63] e.g. Sack, *AM* 21: 27–8: *lu-ú* ^{IM}DUB *lu-⸢ú⸣* [GABA.RI] *šá ina* É ʿPN1 *i-ba-áš-šu-ú* ʿPN1 *a-na*⸣ PN2 *ta-nam-din* 'The document or copy which is in the house of ʿPN1, ʿPN1 shall give to PN2'.

[64] See Petschow (1956), 10 ff., for a legal-historical discussion of *u'iltu*.

[65] e.g. *Camb* 388. 7–9: *ú-il-ti šá* ŠÁM *gam-ru-tu šá* LÚ-*tú* PN1 *ki-i ú-tir-ru a-na* PN2 *it-ta-din* 'PN1 has returned the document for the full price of the slaves and has given it to PN2'; Mold 1. 31. 1–3: *ú-il-tì šá e-peš* NÍ.KA9 *šá* PN1 *u* PN2 *i-pu-šu* 'document of the settling of accounts which PN1 and PN2 made' (ed. Delaunay 1977: 80–1).

[66] The methods used to cancel promissory notes raise questions of archival interpretation, such as whether the presence of such a tablet in the archive of the creditor signifies an unpaid debt. See Petschow (1956), 18; Stolper (1990), 169–70 and n. 21; Wunsch (1993), 7 n. 25; Joannès (1995), 1476–7.

may be referred to,[67] and in unusual circumstances an *u'iltu* might be drawn up before the judges.[68]

5. Terms for Document Classification and Description

In this section I review the Akkadian terminology used to 'label' private archival documents according to their contents or function. Such phrases occur either as 'headings' introducing the subject matter of the tablet to hand, or as a means of referring to another tablet of relevance, by a description of its subject matter. As well as the more commonly occurring 'labels' discussed below, *ad hoc* descriptions could, of course, be formulated.[69] Note, especially, the single reference to a 'tablet of exchange of reeds bearing a drawing',[70] and the actual example of a tablet bearing a plan from the same (Nappāḫu) archive.[71]

5.1. *taḫsistu* (*ša ana*) *lā mašê* 'memorandum'

The label 'memorandum' is found at the very end of a number of brief texts, most of which record transfers of goods in the presence of (*ina ušuzzu ša*) no more than three individuals, who, contrary to the regular practice, often lack both patronym and family name, and are not identified as witnesses (¹·Ú*mu-kin-nu*). Such tablets were usually dated but lack a place. As van Driel (1989a: 116) has ob-

[67] e.g. *Nbk* 48. 1–5: 1 *ma-na* KÙ.BABBAR SAG.DU *a-ki-i ú-il-ti šá* PN1 *šá* PN2 *ina* UGU PN3 *a-ki-i ú-il-ti i-rab-bi* 'One mina of silver, capital, according to the promissory note of PN1 belonging to PN2, the debt of PN3, according to the promissory note it will accrue (interest)'; *Nbn* 600. 18–20: *a-ki-i ú-il-ti maḫ-ri-tu₄ ul-tu ra-man-ni-šú i-nam-din* 'According to the earlier promissory note he will give it from his own resources'.

[68] e.g. *Nbn* 359. 6–8: *u ú-il-ti ina ma-ḫar* ¹·Ú DI.KU₅ᴹᴱˢ *ina muḫ-ḫi* PN1 *e-le-et* 'And the promissory note was drawn up before the judges against PN1'.

[69] e.g. *Nbk* 403. 1–4: *ṭup-pi šá* PN1 *nap-ḫar* NÌ.KA₂-*šú ina lib-bi-šú iš-ṭu-ru-ma pa-an* ᶠPN2 DAM-*šú ú-šad-gi-lu* 'Tablet in which PN1 wrote down all of his assets and made them over to ᶠPN2, his wife'; Mold 2 54+*Nbn* 380. 12–15: PN1 [*a-na u₄-mu ṣa-a-t*]*u man-ma šá-nam-ma a-na la la-qé-e* GIŠ.ŠUB.BAᴹᴱˢ *ù* NÌ.KA₂ *ṭup-pi iš-ṭur-ma* 'PN1 [for all time] wrote a tablet so that no one else should take (a share in his) prebends and assets' (ed. Delaunay 1977: 154–60); Mold 1 31. 1–3: *ú-il-ti šá e-peš* NÌ.KA₂ *šá* PN1 *u* PN2 *i-pu-šu* 'document of the settling of accounts which PN1 and PN2 made' (ed. Delaunay 1977: 80–1).

[70] VS 6 120. 4–5: ᴵᴺDUB *šu-pel-tu₄ šá* GIᴹᴱˢ *šá ṣal-ma-nu*; l. 12: ᴵᴺDUB *šá ṣa-al-ma-nu*; see Joannès (1990b). [71] VS 6 254; see Joannès (1990b).

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served, these texts are relatively frequent among tablets of the Sîn-ilī archive.[72]

5.2. *ṭuppi apilti* 'tablet of payment in full'

References to *ṭuppi apilti* are infrequent among the Neo-Babylonian documents;[73] on the significance of the term see Petschow (1956), 34.

5.3. *ṭuppi* (*ša*) *maḫīri*/*kunuk maḫīri* 'purchase tablet/sealed purchase tablet'

Among the archival texts there are references to tablets recording the purchase of land,[74] slaves,[75] and prebends.[76]

5.4. *ṭuppi mār-banûti* 'manumission tablet'

A reference to a *ṭuppi mār-banûti* can be found in a tablet from the Nūr-Sîn sector of the Egibi archive.[77]

[72] e.g. from the Sîn-ilī archive: VS 3 21; 23; 45; 47; from the Egibi archive: *Nbn* 68 (=CM 3b. 104); 557; 708.

[73] e.g. Sack, *AM* 75. 19–21: ᴵᴺDUB *a-pil-ti i-ka*ᴵ(wr. *nak*)-*na-ku-ma ri-iḫ-ti* KÙ.BABBAR PN1 *i-nam-din-nu* 'They shall seal a *ṭuppi apilti* and PN1 will pay the rest of the silver'.

[74] e.g. *Nbn* 580. 8–12: ᴵᴺDUB *šá* KI.LAM *ki-i ú-GUR-ma a-na* PN1 *it-ta-din* ᴵᴺDUB *šá* 1(PI) 3 BÁN ˢᴱNUMUN *šá ina* É *šá* PN2 *il-la-'* [*šá*] PN1 *šu-ú* 'He has returned the purchase tablet to PN1. The tablet of 1 *pān* 3 *sūt* of land which turns up in the house of PN2 belongs to PN1.' Note also the reference to a *kunuk maḫīri* in *Nbn* 85, cited in 3.4.

[75] e.g. *Dar* 429. 11–13: ᴺᴬ⁴KIŠIB KI.LAM *šá* ¹·Ú*a-me-lu-ut-*�'*tu₄ šú*ᵎ-*a-tu₄ a-na ṣe-*ᵎ*bu-ti*ᵎ [*šá*] ᶠPN1 *a-na šu-mu šá* PN2 [*ṣaṭ-ru*] ᴺᴬ⁴KIŠIB KI.LAM *šá* LÚ-*tú šu-a-ti* PN2 *ki-i ú-tir-ri a-na* ᶠPN1 *it-*[*tad-din*] 'The sealed purchase tablet of that slave which was drawn up at the request of ᶠPN1 in the name of PN2, PN2 has returned the sealed document of the purchase price of that slave to ᶠPN1'. Note that slave-sale documents were not usually sealed, suggesting that the writing ᴺᴬ⁴KIŠIB here simply means 'tablet' rather than 'sealed tablet' (cf. 4.4).

[76] e.g. *Dar* 463. 12–13: *ina* ᴵᴺDUB KI.LAM *šá* GIŠ.ŠUB.BA *šu-a-ti a-na ši-bu-ú-tu ina lib-bi a-ši-ib* 'He will sit as a witness at the (drawing-up of) the purchase tablet of that prebend'.

[77] *Nbn* 697 (=CM 3b 211), 1–6: PN1 PN2 ¹·Ú*qal-la-šú šá* PN3 *šu-un-šú im-bu-ú* ᴵᴺDUBᴸ·Ú DUMU.DÙ-*ú-tu-šú ana na-da-nu* ŠUKᴴᴵ·ᴬ *ù* ᵀᵁᴳ*lu-bu-ši-šú ik-nu-ku* 'PN1 sealed a tablet of manumission of PN2, his slave who is called PN3, on condition of his supplying him with rations and clothing.' See also MacGinnis (1993).

5.5. *ṭuppi mārūti* 'adoption tablet'

The single Neo-Babylonian reference to a *ṭuppi mārūti* known to me comes from an Egibi document;[78] however, tablets of adoption, though not headed as such, are certainly present among the archival texts.[79]

5.6. *ṭuppi šupêlti* 'exchange tablet'

This tablet heading is followed by a statement of the properties exchanged and the parties involved.[80] Tablets of exchange were prepared in duplicate because each party required proof of title to their new property, hence the presence of the clause *ištēnâ šaṭāri il(te)qû* (3.2).

5.7. *ṭuppi zitti* 'division tablet'

This tablet heading is followed by a brief description of the property to be divided between the parties;[81] again, each party would have taken a tablet.

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[78] *Nbn* 356 (=CM 3b 167), 19–21: *ina* MU.5.KAM RN LUGAL TIN.TIR^KI *ia-a-tú u* PN1 *mu-ti-ia* PN2 *a-na ma-ru-tu ni-il-qa-am-ma ṭup-pi ma-ru-ti-šú niš-ṭur-ma* 'In the 5th year of RN king of Babylon my husband PN1 and I took PN2 as a son and wrote his tablet of adoption'.

[79] e.g. BM 77344 (Kohler and Peiser 1890: 10; see Baker forthcoming for a handcopy and edition of this text). Neo-Babylonian adoption has been studied by San Nicolò (1930).

[80] *Camb* 349. 1–5: *ṭup-pi šu-pel-tu₄ šá* A.ŠÀ É *ù aš-ta-pi-ʾri¹ šá* PN1 PN2 *ù* ʿPN3 DAM-*šú a-na a-ḫa-meš uš-pe-e-lu* 'Exchange tablet of the field, house, and slaves which PN1, PN2, and ʿPN3 his wife exchanged'. Cf. *Camb* 375. 1–7; *Dar* 265. 1–3.

[81] e.g. *TCL* 12 43. 1–3: *ṭup-pi* ḪA.LA *šá* PN1 *ù* PN2 *šá* KASKAL^II *šá* AD^(MEŠ)-*šú-nu it-ti a-ḫa-meš i-zu-zu* 'Tablet of the share of their fathers' business venture which PN1 and PN2 divided between themselves'; *Cyr* 128. 1–4: *ṭup-pi* ḪA.LA *šá* GI^MEŠ É *nu-ʾdun-nu¹-*[*ú*] *šá* ʿPN1 AMA-*šú-nu šá* PN2 *ú-za-i-zu-ma a-na* PN3 ŠEŠ-*šú* ḪA.LA-*šú šá* É *id-di-nu* 'Tablet of the share in (urban) land, the dowry property of ʿPN1, their mother, which PN2 divided and gave to PN3, his brother, his share in the property'; *Dar* 80. 1–5: *ṭup-pi* ḪA.LA *šá* ^ŠENUMUN *zaq-pu ù me-re-šú šá e-liš ù šap-liš šá* ÍD *eš-šú* DU₈ KÁ.GAL ^dʾEN.LÍL NAM TIN.TIR^KI *šá* PN1 *a-di* ḪA.LA *šá* ŠEŠ^MEŠ-*šú ù* PN2 ŠEŠ AD-*šú it-ti a-ḫa-meš i-zu-zu* 'Tablet of the share in the planted and fallow land above and below the *nāru eššu* by the Enlil Gate in the district of Babylon of PN1 together with the share which his brothers and PN2, his uncle, divided between themselves'.

5.8. *ummi eqlēti* (AMA A.ŠÀ^MEŠ) 'deed of title' (?)

The term *ummi eqlēti* appears to have been used in the sense 'deed of title', and was interpreted by San Nicolò and Ungnad as a kind of cadastral document kept by the owner of a property.[82] The term itself is rarely attested, presumably because reference to such tablets was necessary only in unusual circumstances; normally their transfer was routine and required no comment. However, there are numerous examples of tablets which, one supposes, can be identified as belonging to this category of document.

As for the actual attestations, in one instance two parties to an exchange of houses undertook to exchange tablets and *ummi eqlēti*.[83] In another case, the archive-holder Ṭābiya of the Sîn-ilī family, having paid the remainder of the purchase price of some land, requested the *ummi eqlēti* from the seller; the seller agreed that, until he handed over the deed(s), any claimant would be satisfied from his own property.[84] In the third example, a woman debtor wanted to dispose of her field, which had been given as security and which her creditor had passed on as security to a creditor of his own; she offered to hand over the *ummi eqlēti* in return for a 'gift' (*qīštu*).[85]

6. Conclusions

Examination of the native terminology sheds light on the conventions of record-keeping as practised by the Neo-Babylonian scribes and by those who commissioned the tablets and looked after them.

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[82] See San Nicolò and Ungnad (1935), 145 n. 6; Ungnad (1937), 18; cf. Joannès (1990b), who relates such tablets to the *ṭuppāt ummātim* known from Old Babylonian texts. Professor K. Veenhof kindly drew my attention to the use of the term *ummi ṭuppim* in Old Assyrian documents.

[83] *VS* 5 18. 17–19: ^IMDUB^MEŠ *u* AMA A.ŠÀ^MEŠ *a-na a-ḫa-meš i-nam-din-nu-*' 'They shall give one another the sealed documents and the deeds of title'.

[84] *VS* 6 50. 5–7: AMA A.ŠÀ^MEŠ-*a.ni ʿšá¹* ^ŠENUMUN *šá* ^IdXXX-DINGIR *ina* ŠU^II-*ka im-ḫur-ru i-bi-ni* 'Give me his *ummi eqlēti* of the land which Sîn-ilī (brother of Ṭābiya) bought from you'.

[85] *Cyr* 337. 9–13: ^ŠENUMUN-*ú-a šá ina* ŠU^II PN *maš-ka-nu ṣa-ab-ta-ta* NÍG.BA *qí-ša-an-ni* AMA A.ŠÀ^MEŠ *lu-ud-dak-kam-ma* ^ŠENUMUN *šu-a-tì pa-ni-ka li-id-gu-ul* 'My land which has been taken from PN as security, give me a gift and let me give you the *ummi eqlēti*; let that land belong to you'.

It reveals a well-established set of terms, phrases, and procedures which could be adapted to suit the requirements of the case, and whose implications must have been readily understood by all involved.

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12

Reconstructing an Archive: Account and Journal Texts from Persepolis

MARIA BROSIUS

1. Introduction

'Reconstructing an archive' is understood to involve two tasks: the investigation of how an archive was organized, and the reconstruction of the bureaucratic stages involved in the process of record-keeping. Certain kinds of information were written onto a tablet or papyrus to record a specific process within the administration. Can we establish how these processes worked? Were copies of texts made, and if so, which texts and how many duplicates were created? Do the size and shape of a tablet tell us about its contents and about its use within an administrative process? To what extent do seals and seal impressions help us in determining what kind of tablet we are dealing with? Where were the tablets written? How were they stored once they arrived at their final destination?

The Persepolis Fortification Tablets, so called because they were found at the northern corner of the Fortification wall of the Persepolis Terrace, were, according to Ernst Herzfeld, discarded there. But is this true? Scholars in the past did not pay great attention to the way tablets were found on the ground. Only with the find of the archive of Ebla did such details begin to be recorded carefully. A closer look at the northern terrace of the Persepolis area suggests that several small offices ran alongside the wall. It seems more likely that we are dealing with the finds of one office within the adminis-

Note. For bibliography see p. 283.

tration and that the tablets were stored in one of the archival rooms of that part of the terrace (cf. Lewis 1994: 20–1). In considering the organization of any archive we are confronted, of course, with the fundamental problem of how to define an archive as different from a storeroom or record office, but it remains true, and more important than the question of definition, that both an archive and a store-room require the organization of tablets and texts in such a way as to allow information to be easily accessible and instantly retrievable. This means that criteria must have existed to allow the retrieval of information on tablets, and our task is to find a way of determining what these criteria might have been. As David Lewis put it: 'We are practically in the position of a future excavator faced with different types of hard and floppy disc and tape, sometimes themselves in different word-processing programs. This was a situation which faced Persepolis scribes and officials every day; no doubt they were better at it' (Lewis 1994: 22).

Why retrieve information at all? In the case of the Persepolis tablets we are dealing with an administrative area covering parts of modern Fars, reaching west towards Susa and north towards Media. Local records were produced, copied, and sent to Persepolis, detailing the local income of royal and private (?) estates or of villages, and distinguishing between commodities such as grain, sesame, fruit, wine or beer, and animals. The intake and produce of these estates and villages varied; commodities were given as taxes to royal stores, and were exchanged and used to pay the high officials and the workers of Persepolis and its surroundings, to feed animals, and to provide provisions for travellers en route to and from the king. All this information was recorded and collected. Monthly and annual accounts were made recording the amounts going into and out of the storehouses and stock-yards. Each time a single transfer was made at an estate, it was noted down on a small tablet on the premises. One copy was made for the estate owner, and another functioned as a receipt for the official authorized to collect a given amount of foodstuff. At the end of the month a summary was made by the estate owner (or his administrator) accounting for the total amount of produce which had left his premises, as well as for imported items. The same procedure was applied to produce an annual account. Over the years, records were kept to allow information on each individual, estate, storehouse, or village, and to assess whether late payments had

been made, or whether grain amounts had remained constant or otherwise.

It is still not clear whether the tablets found in Persepolis were actually written there or not (cf. Hallock 1978: 114). Probably some were and some were not. Tablets were sent to Persepolis (or to offices nearby like Mattezziš or Kamenuš), as records to prove that x amount of grain had left a certain storehouse, be it as rations for workers, for animals, for travellers, or for other purposes. Other tablets must have been written by auditors and accountants who had been sent out from Persepolis to compile official accounts. All this information was copied onto tablets which summarized the total expenditure of a place or individual for a certain period of time—a month, a year, or several years. The tablets on which this information was stored were so-called account and journal texts. It is these which contain implicit information about the way the Persepolis archive worked, how tablets were written, and how the bureaucracy functioned. They often refer to accounts of a product of three consecutive years, e.g. years 15, 16, and 17 (of Darius I), but state that the present account was written later, sometimes up to four years after the accounting period. Thus, the tablets pertaining to an estate or region during these years must have been stored and retrieved when the account could finally be drawn up. At this point we realize that thousands of tablets must have been involved, and these must have been stored in a highly organized way to allow this administration to work at all. This also means that our present corpus of $c.5,500$ available texts (out of a total of $c.33,000$ tablets and fragments) reflects only a small and random selection of the total, leaving us with the question of how extensive the Persepolis archive actually was.

While nowadays a computerized database has become an invaluable aid in carrying out this kind of research, Hallock's insight into these tablet texts and the detailed observations he was able to make about them still offer invaluable information (Hallock 1969; 1977; 1978). Even if he could not pursue the questions of text format and seal position, he still noted the formal characteristics of a tablet. Thus he commented on the distinctive format of the account and journal texts as compared with the bulk of the corpus. Most tablets are small and oval-shaped, but the account and journal texts are all rectangular. This may be due in part to the fact that they were

all produced in or near Persepolis (while the small oval ones might have travelled from outside), and the rectangular shape is also appropriate to the sometimes substantial size of these texts. There is in fact considerable variety in the exact shape and size of the rectangular tablets. I believe that the shape can tell us something about the way these tablets may have been stored in a(n) (archival) room, and that the way in which the text was written onto a tablet reflects the bureaucratic conventions which were followed systematically for specific text types. Besides the importance of the tablet shape, Hallock also noted the position of different seals. The use of seals allows us to distinguish administrative areas and to identify individuals using personal seals. The seal impressions (and the lack of seals altogether on some tablets) help us to get a better idea about administrative processes and office organization.

In the following discussion I concentrate on describing the shape and format of several different groups of tablets and discuss to what extent this investigation can assist us in the question of storage and retrieval. In Section 3 I discuss the information revealed by the texts themselves on accountancy and accountants.

2. Tablet Shape, Format, and Composition of Account Texts

As mentioned above, Hallock noticed that all account and journal texts are rectangular in shape.[1] They range from very small rectangular tablets of 33 mm. height × 55 mm. width × 10 mm. thickness[2] to extremely large ones (220 mm. × 190 mm. × 15 mm.). Some have an elongated shape, others are slightly rounded, others have a well-proportioned rectangular shape (e.g. 69 mm. × 96 mm. × 10 mm.). I begin the description with a distinctive group of rectangular tablets of vertical ('portrait') orientation, of an average size of 120 mm. × 55 mm. × 10 mm.

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[1] With the interesting observation that 11 published letters also have a rectangular shape—which Hallock explains from the fact that the contents of these tablets relate to account and journal texts (Hallock 1978: 113). That is an intriguing theory for anyone investigating the significance of tablet shapes.

[2] Subsequent measurements follow that order.

2.1. *Vertical rectangular-shaped tablets*

In the present corpus there are 38 vertical rectangular-shaped tablets. These all account for different kinds of animals (mostly small cattle, fowls, and cows). A clear formula can be identified in the layout of the texts.[3] The first section begins by identifying the text as an account for a specific kind of animal. The account can be further specified as a tax payment (Elam. *baziš*). Usually the stock-yard is mentioned, providing a geographical name (hereafter GN). The name of the supplier (preceded by the word *kurmin*) and the apportioner (PN followed by the word *šaramana*) may be given as well. This information constitutes the first section, written continuously from the left margin. The second part consists of a varying number of entries, each composed of a numeral and the kind of animal referred to. This information is listed in two clearly defined columns, one for figures, one for text. The animals are listed in a certain order: male and female adults, then male and female young animals. The total sum for any type of entry is marked by the sign PAP (=total), preceding the total figure. Thus, a total is instantly recognizable when looking at a tablet. Each entry within the text for a given animal lists yearly figures, which means that several entries record the figures of several years for a place or an individual. The sum given for one year can be followed by a statement referring to the account, in which case this text is written continuously, overriding the column/text division. Such a statement might read: '(This is) the account of the 18th year. The account was made in the 19th year.'[4] A third section following the annual entries can either repeat the information stated in the first section, i.e. the place, supplier, and apportioner, or else list the 'grand total' (*ir tarlinna*). This section is always separated from the main text by a blank line.[5] The text in this third section is continuous, beginning at the left-hand margin. It also seems to be conventional to mark the total by a preceding blank line.[6] Of the 38 vertical texts, 16 have seal 12 im-

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[3] Some are fragmentary, possibly missing their first lines, but the preserved shape of the tablet and the text allow their inclusion in this group.

[4] For example, PF-NN 1480 accounts for cows at the place Radumaš for five years.

[5] PF-NN 2042, PF-NN 701, PF-NN 2194, PF-NN 2359, PF-NN 2361, PF-NN 2375, PF-NN 2491, PF-NN 2561, PF 2010; exception: PF-NN 2189.

[6] PF 2008 after l. 27; PF 2010 after l. 31; PF 2013 after ll. 23, 35, 48; PF-NN 701 after l. 44; PF-NN 2042; PF-NN 2287 after ll. 25, 50; PF-NN 2262 after ll. 31, 50; PF-NN 2546 after l. 42.

pressed on the reverse or left side of the tablet. This is an office seal rather than one used by a single individual, and can be located to a place called Kamenuš near Persepolis (Hallock 1977: 132).[7]

It is quite clear that these texts form a group, conforming to a recognizable scribal convention whereby the different elements are instantly identifiable: continuous text; lists presented in columns, with 'total' signs within the column to mark the end of a sum; and sometimes a third section of continuous text, which may vary in its contents and may supply additional information related to the accounting.[8]

Deviations from this pattern occur: PF 2011 has the vertical rectangular shape typical of the other account texts for animals, but PF 2012, which contains the same type of information, is of horizontal rectangular shape. Both documents list the information in columns, and the fact that PF 2012 has 8 columns may account for its different shape. This tablet is certainly an account, as the last line states: *mušin bel 16* (?) [-*x* (*xx*)] (l. 28). Noteworthy is the final remark of PF 2011, written after four blank lines following the end of the text (l. 38): *medasumaš bel 20–nama* [d.]*ITU.lg Markašanašma 2 d.naan pirka tinkeš* 'They sent the *medasumaš* on day 2, month 8, year 20'.[9] According to Hallock, this sentence was written in a different style of writing and added by a different hand (Hallock 1969: 617 n. 1). It is additional information, not part of the actual accounting text, and therefore separated from it; but it is still an important administrative comment which needed to be added.

Only 14 texts referring to animals were written on horizontal rectangular tablets. Of these, PF 2085, PF-NN 2181, and PF-NN 2281 bear the characteristics of vertical rectangular texts: they include the first and second of the sections described above, they were processed at Kamenuš, and seal 12 was used. Why they should be written on a horizontal rectangular tablet remains unclear, but such deviations do occur (Hallock 1978: 113). PF-NN 2292, PF-

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[7] Although more detailed analysis is required, it appears that seal 12 is the most commonly used on the account texts. For references to Kamenuš, where we can trace the activities of an accounting official named Irkamka, see PF 1995. 24–6: 'This account Irkamka gave to us (at) Kamenuš in the 21st year, on the 3rd day (of) the 2nd month.' Cf PF 1995. 7–10 and PF-NN 2204. 15.

[8] A repetition of the information from the first section occurs in PF-NN 2262, while in PF-NN 2280 a precise date is given for the accounting. Note the variety in PF-NN 2491, where ll. 1–2 have *Pukša damana*, while l. 47 reads '*kurmin Pukša*. Do these terms express the same meaning?

[9] On *medasumaš* see below, p. 278.

NN 2277, PF-NN 2340, and PF-NN 2539 give the information in columns, listing numbers of animals on the left, followed by personal names (PF-NN 2292, PF-NN 2277, and PF-NN 2340) or personal and geographical names (PF-NN 2539). Only PF-NN 2292 (no seal) contains a reference to the account in the last line (l. 10). Perhaps these texts list the payments of individuals. Despite their obviously different content, these tablets follow scribal conventions similar to those employed in the vertical rectangular examples: there is a distinction between continuous text beginning at the left-hand margin and the text of entries displayed in columns, with the 'total' sign as a marker at the left-hand side. The information given on these tablets seems to be incomplete: the year is not always stated (PF 2085, PF-NN 2277), and some give no indication of place (PF-NN 2181, PF-NN 2281, PF-NN 2292, PF-NN 2277, PF-NN 2340, PF-NN 2539). PF 2007 is particularly noteworthy within this group, since it is almost square in shape and begins with the statement concerning the 'grand total' (*ir tartinna*), which is elsewhere given at the end, as described above. On this tablet the last two lines read 'This is the second tablet of the 15th year'; this statement is preceded by a blank line, denoting its special importance for the text. There may have been a corresponding 'first' tablet containing the first and second sections of the accounting statement, completed on the second tablet owing to lack of space on the first (cf. Hallock 1978: 116). Alternatively, PF 2007 may be a simple copy of an identical text on the 'first' tablet: it remains to be seen whether the question can be resolved.[10]

2.2. *Texts referring to different kinds of fruit*

Of the 23 account texts referring to fruit, 4 are vertical rectangular— PF 1987 (different seals), PFa 33 (no seal), PF-NN 575 (no seal), PF-NN 2368 (seal 12); none of them bears the features of the vertical rectangular animal texts (these is no reference to the account in l. 1, and no division into two or three sections). PF 1987 begins with a 4-column structure (*ukkap daka*), as does PF-NN 575. Yet PF-NN 146, which is similar in content, has a horizontal rectangular shape

PF 1982, PF 1983, PF 1984, and PF- NN 2347 all contain the

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[10] The reason for considering this possibility is that some tablets include a comment such as 'this is the fifth tablet', and it would be implausible to suppose that the scribe required five tablets to write one text (see e.g. PF 1994. 11).

same text, the column structure in l. 1 starting with *ukkap daka* . . . The tablets have a small rectangular shape, all divide the text between several lines of columns and continuous text, and the latter identifies the document as an account, unusually naming the accountant, Mašika. Entries in the columns are all divided by blank lines. Seal 27 is used for all four texts, applied several times on all the remaining sides of the tablets. PF 1983 and PF-NN 2347 are almost identical, dated to the same year 17, and listing identical amounts of dates (MA) produced by the same group of people. The only difference is the additional second column (*ullaka* 'delivered') in PF-NN 2347, which, however, is empty apart from two 'total' signs in ll. 3, 10, and 11 (aligned with the other 'total' signs in these lines). This is the first known occurrence of a duplicate account (W-text); why it was copied is difficult to say. Both texts are sealed, i.e. authorized, but neither is labelled as being a copy or 'second tablet'. PF 1984 lists the same people (in the same order as PF 1983 and PF-NN 2347) plus four other personal names for years 18 and 19. These three texts make a clear distinction between the information provided in the column section (including GN and PN of supplier in the last part) and the continuous text beginning at the left-hand margin containing information about the account (accountant and date). PF 1982 accounts for the annual supply of apples for/from (?) just one individual, Bakabada (years 15 and 17). The estate (*irmatam*) of one Bakabada (the same person?) is mentioned in PF 1256.[11]

PF-NN 146, PF-NN 2180,[12] PF-NN 2188, PF-NN 2346, PF-NN 2347, and PF-NN 2542 are of horizontal rectangular shape, and all begin with columns (*ukkap daka/ullaka/mazzika*). PF-NN 146 and PF-NN 2180 are of identical shape, and the layout is similar: more than two sets of columns, followed by a section of continuous text at the left-hand margin concerning the date and further information on the administration. Like PF-NN 2346, PF-

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[11] I am not certain that Hallock's translation 'fruit (for) PN' is correct. Could these be payments made by those individuals to a storeroom at a GN? If *kurmin* should be consistently translated as 'supplied by' (Aperghis 1998), then we may have in the first part of the text the list of payments made by these individuals to the storehouse. The supplier of the storehouse was accountable to the officials at Persepolis, where the account itself was written. On the question of whether we translate as 'for' or 'from' PN cf. PF 1985, which lists deposits and withdrawals of figs from people at Tiliman (*taššupikkimar Tiliman*).

[12] Column headings slightly different.

NN 2368 uses blank lines to distinguish between separate entries. PF-NN 2360 (=PFa 1) separates the total from two entries. The reverse contains five lines, the remainder being left blank, but two further lines are added on the left side, reading *ṭuppi hi Sarakuzziš tubaka* 'This tablet pertains to Sarakuzziš' (ll. 14–15). The separation of this statement from the rest of the text may identify it as an extra comment, not immediately relevant to the main context. Perhaps the position on the side of the tablet means that it was supposed to be legible while on file. There are two further interesting features about this text: the expression *ukke daka* (note the singular) is added to a PN within the column listing (*m. Zimakka ukke daka h. Dautiya, m. Kazamukaš* (?) *ukke daka h. Tikra*); and the text makes no reference to the account, only the apportioner (Sarakuzziš). Could it be that this kind of text records transactions carried out by Sarakuzziš the apportioner and made *to* these individuals and that *ukke daka* means 'given to him' (Hallock 1978: 116: 'deposited to his account')?

PF 1990 and PF-NN 2276 both refer in l. 1 to a sealed document of Zinini as authorization for the account. Both tablets have an elongated rectangular shape and seal 118 (plus seal 12 only on PF 1990) and consist of 9–10 columns and a continuous text, listing different kinds of fruit (a different list on each). Also belonging to this group of elongated tablets are PF 1989, PF 2081, and PF-NN 2188.[13] Could these be payments by individuals to the storehouse of the local region?[14]

Whatever the explanation of the contents of these texts is, it is clear that they share common scribal conventions. Most give a blank line before totals, divide the text between column format and a section of continuous text, and place the 'total' sign in sums as the same position. Additional information is provided visibly separated from the main text; some texts are clearly divided into sections (PF-NN 2368, PF-NN 2346).

[13] 'The *halmi Zinini*: cf PF 2085. 8: *3 pitika hubi halmi Bakaparna «ma» nama* '3 transferred (?) on the basis of a sealed document of Bakaparna'.

[14] There are a number of grain texts listing individuals by name alongside detailed amounts of grain. It is quite possible that these texts constitute individual payments to a (royal) storehouse. On the other hand, we need to compare the evidence of certain journals, which list individuals receiving grain or wine from a local storehouse (PF-NN 577, PF-NN 1019, PF-NN 1007).

2.3. *Wine texts*

Of the 31 account texts for wine, 3 begin with *mušin* and have no seal (PF-NN 704, PF-NN 2289, PF-NN 172: cf. other *mušin* texts which also seem to have no seal). With two exceptions, the tablets are very small, hard to distinguish from one another. The texts beginning with *mušin* are continuous, while others use blank lines to separate sections of the text, usually totals and references to accounts (see PF 1997 after ll. 6 and 23; PF 2002 after l. 8; PF 2003 after l. 4; PF 2004 after l. 4). PF-NN 2352 is a good example of the separation of entries by blank lines (after ll. 7, 18, 21).

2.4. *Grain texts*

There are 15 texts altogether,[15] written on small and very small tablets (average 25 mm.×55 mm.×15 mm.). They all have continuous texts of 7–20 lines. These are very similar to the texts of PF-NN 706, PF-NN 2289, and PF-NN 172, where we have an exchange between wine and animals, while here the exchange is made between grain and an animal. The same information is given: account, date and place, names of people involved (*ambarabaraš/*GEŠTIN *kutira*, the *haturmakša* and the *etira*), then details about the exchange (*sut*) (or a statement that no *sut* was made), and the handing over of the purchased animal to the appropriate official, in most cases a man named Bakaparna.

Comparing PF-NN 101 with PF-NN 2277, which both list individual payments (?) of grain/cows and state whether or not a *sut* was made from the total, it is interesting to note that the grain document is small and rectangular, while the animal document is a large vertical and rectangular text, although they are both short (17 and 19 lines respectively).

2.5. *Observations on scribal conventions*

The picture which emerges is that there was an established scribal convention, which means that rules must have existed which are applicable to all the account texts. Even if the convention was not always followed strictly, we can extract a general picture of how an account text was applied on clay. There are purely formal features

[15] PF 1972–9, PF 2078, PF-NN 776, PF-NN 1015, PF-NN 2208, PF-NN 2266, PF-NN 2284, PF-NN 2355.

which allow a certain kind of text to be recognized. The sectioning of a text means that a reader would know instantly where to look for total sums, and for information about who did the accounting and when it was done. This kind of professionalism employed in the compilation of the texts reflects long-standing practice and convention.

Can we draw any conclusions from the shape of the tablet? This is a chicken-and-egg question: how much was the shape of the tablet influenced by the text that needed to be put on it, and vice versa? We can get closer to an answer by investigating whether certain shapes are used for a certain kind of text. To some extent this can be demonstrated in the vertical rectangular tablets bearing accounts for animals. Although some vertical tablets relating to fruit have been discovered, quite clearly the shape was primarily employed for animal texts; other fruit texts prove that both vertical and horizontal tablets bore similar content, and perhaps we need to allow for 'errors'. The frequent use of seal 12 on all of these texts demonstrates that we are dealing with the work of one office, and it could easily have happened occasionally that a tablet of the wrong shape was chosen. In the case of the long horizontal tablets, the shape is a function of the need to put a number of columns alongside each other, and so may be considered incidental. On the other hand, it is only the fruit documents which exhibit a long elongated shape: here the shape becomes, directly or indirectly, a marker for the commodity described in the tablet.

It is also no coincidence that all tablets beginning with *mušin* have no seal, regardless of the commodity referred to. There is obviously a need to study the different text types to see what action or part of an action in the transfer of foodstuffs they may reflect.

3. The Accounting

There appear to be two terms used for official accountants: *mušin zikkira*, and *halmut haššira*.[16] Only a few are known by name: Mašika

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[16] Hallock distinguishes between *mušin zikkira* and *halmut hašira* as accountant and auditor, but both terms are used for Dattana. We seem to have Elamite and Persian terms being used interchangeably, rather than two terms with different meanings. For the word for document appearing as both *halmi* and *miyatukka* see Lewis (1994), 27. In a few texts the title is *mušin huttira*.

and Uššuš are known from PF 1983 and PF-NN 2347,[17] and Dattana from six tablets (PF 1238–41, PF 1274, PF 2037, PF-NN 2352).[18] The latter texts record daily rations for Dattana and three servant boys (*puhu libap*), consisting of 2 quarts of flour per day for the master and 1 quart each for the boys. The flour ration in PF 1241 is issued to them for a whole year. Dattana carries a sealed document of Bakabana, an official we can locate at Susa. It is possible that this Dattana travelled in the Susa–Persepolis region to make his annual reports on the accounts, aided by three junior assistants. PF 1274 records a daily ration of 1 quart of beer for Dattana, and the same amount is received by the accountant Tamašba (PF 793), while Kampiya receives a ration of 30 quarts of wine (PF-NN 548).[19] PF 1258 (III/28) names Beltin as the accountant (*mušin zikkira*) who, together with three boys, receives the same amount of flour as Datanna, and the accountant Zamašba, carrying a sealed document of Parnaka, gets 1½ quarts per day; he is accompanied by two boys (PF 1259; XII/23). Appisulu, the *mušin huttira* (*sic*), gets a flour ration of 60 quarts for an unspecified period of time, but at 2 quarts per day this should keep him going for a month (PFa 7, II/22).[20] In PF 1269 (no date) Miššabadda is named as the companion of Irtuppiya. For a period of 3 months and 13 days he and two boys receive 2 quarts and 1 quart each of grain respectively. This is possibly the same Miššabadda mentioned in PF 1986, an account text in which we find the words 'that was received on the basis of a document written on parchment, and Miššabadda took it' (PF 1986. 31–2).[21] A letter, PF 1837, names Kamšabana as the accountant of the woman Irtašduna (= Artystone), who orders 1,000 quarts

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[17] For further references to Ussus see PF-NN 2300. 29, PF-NN 2268. 3, PF-NN 2346. 16–17.

[18] PF-NN 2352. 22–4 has the same addition as PF 1997 for Irtamka: *mušin bel 21–na* ᵈ·ITU.*lg Turumarna 9 d.naan daka m Dadama muku dunuš h.Kamenuš* 'This account of the 21st year, 2nd month, 3rd day, Irtamka gave us at Kamenuš'.

[19] PF-NN 548 lists Kampiya as the recipient of a wine ration (l. 9), and names him as the accountant of this ration list for year 17 at Dakamanuš (l. 32). Cf. PF 650 and 659, where he is named as a scribe (*K. talliš*), and PF 1323, where he and three others receive a travel ration of flour (1½ quarts for each man) on their way to Susa. PF-NN 2280. 57 tells us that on one occasion Kampiya did not send the account: *mušin hi bel 15–na bel 16–na m.[Kampiya in–]ni tinkiš*.

[20] This text reappears as part of a journal text in PFa 29. 51.

[21] PF 1495 issues a flour ration for Miššabadda for XII/22. The text reads: 'Together with 31 men he took the tax [*baziš*] of Udana' (ll. 3–6). Cf PF 1065, the authorization of a beer ration of 60 quarts for Irtuppiya to give to an accountant (*mušin huttira*) for a period of 6 months.

of wine to be issued to him. The tablet includes the note '(in) the 22nd year the sealed document was delivered'. Problems arise when the sealed document is not provided: PF 1957. 37–8: 'Battiš and his companions say: "Mirinzana did not give us the sealed document of what was carried forward in the 21st year."' Mirinzana himself seems to be a high official in charge of accountants:

Tell Marduka, Mirinzana spoke as follows: 'May god and king become thy *širi*! Formerly I addressed you saying: "one of our companions comes to the area of Elam, where I shall not be going, he will make the accounts." Now he is not coming after all; a *kak parpar* is coming. He has sent Umaya forth. Let him come, let him make the accounts. Do you make there (accommodate him?). And the withdrawals of cattle, barley, wine, and *tarmu* to be turned over to him, let him send (them hither).' (PF 1858; PFS 57; no date)[22]

One accountant is sent to a particular region, in this case Elam, on the authorization of a higher official, to make the accounts. His duties include receiving the documents concerning the withdrawals of foodstuffs, distinguished by commodity. The last sentence presumably means that these texts are being transferred to Persepolis.

Further information on the activities of the accountants is revealed in PFa 28 (PFS, no date):

Tell Mirinzana, Šakšabanuš spoke as follows: 'To thy *tartammati*. A sealed document concerning (the fact) that the accountants are not delivering the accounts was sent forth to Parnaka. The man who carried that tablet, that delivery man (*ṭuppi hube kuzza* [*ul*]*lu?ra*) fled away. Now do you seize the man and send him forth to Media. In Media there will be a close questioning of him [lit. 'his oil-squeezing']. Furthermore, when you send forth a tablet from you to Parnaka, then write on that tablet the name of the man who is carrying the tablet and send it forth. Thus Parnaka ordered and I made it . . . Formerly the name of that man was not written.'

Problems concerning the accounts will go to the highest official,

Parnaka, and we see Mirinzana within the bureaucratic structure between the accountants and the officials Šakšabanuš and Parnaka.

Accountants are both sent out from Persepolis and also operating at local storehouses:

Tell the accountants of the place Šullake, Irdabama spoke as follows: 'I ordered for Pirmaksa (?) 150 (?) *kurrima* of grain from my estate. And a parchment document concerning (the place) Raku . . ., he will be making the report. Do look at the sealed document and do the accounting.' (PFa 27; PFS 51, no date)

Sometimes we find references to accountants in the text, e.g. PF 1982–4, 'Mašika made the account' (last line of text). PF 2084, which lists withdrawals from storehouses, states in ll. 21–4: 'regarding the 15th year and 16th year, the storekeepers say "our account Zinini and his companions made."' In other cases the accounts, which had been made locally, are being sent to Persepolis: 'they sent the account of the 20th year, on the . . . th day, 7th month' (PF 1963. 32–4, last lines). In PF 1988 (deposit/withdrawal text) the accountant complains in l. 20: 'Dahima, he did not send a sealed document [i.e. for year 22]'; and in ll. 33 ff. he continues: 'the account of the 22nd year Ussuma reckoned afterwards in the 23rd year, 2nd month. The accounting was done on the 2nd day of the 8th month. Tarkawiš the *karamarašp* [*sic*], he did not apply a seal.'[23] In PF-NN 42 and PF-NN 2192 the accountant seems to be rather annoyed at the lack of order: *halmi inni tinkemanpi . . . hi tubaka hi tirina* 'A sealed document has not been sent; regarding this (neglect), this has to be stated' (PF-NN 2192). Other texts refer to the addressee of the tablet: *ṭuppi hi Sarakuzziš tubaka* 'This tablet pertains to Sarakuzziš' (PF-NN 2360. 14–50) and *ṭuppi hi Nabapirruna tubaka* 'This tablet pertains to Nabapirruna' (PFa 33).

The recognized term for account is *mušin*, but scribes often refer to their accounting document as *ṭuppi* 'tablet'. In one case, PF

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[22] PF 2003, an account text, is actually sealed with his seal. It lists the collection of wine from four individuals at different places (storekeepers?) for the place Ziršamattiš. The wine contribution is described as *hapiršimaš*. Seal 57 is also found on PF 331 (Battiš collecting live camels), on PF 234, PF 237, PF 239, and PF 242 (references to grain carried forward as balance). These texts perhaps relate to the balances found later in journals, and which, when missing, are commented upon by the scribe, as in the case of PF 1957 (?). For further comment on Mirinzana and his seal, PFS 57, see Hallock (1978), 113 with n. 11, mentioning Mirinzana as the addressee in PF-NN 394 and in Fort. 1680 as the recipient of cowhides.

[23] For *karamaraš* see PF 1256, which records a supply of flour to Teatukka the archer and *karamaraš* at the estate of Bakabada, the *habezziš*. In accordance with a sealed document of the king, he and three servants receive respectively 2 quarts and 1 quart daily. The question is whether here, as in PF 1238–40, we are dealing with an accountant and his three assistants. In that case, *karamaraš* might be a title connected with accounting. The plural form *karamarašbe* in PF 1988 might refer to Tarkawiš and his assistants. If they did not apply a seal (*halmi inni haraš*?), somewhere in the process of accounting a deliberate (?) omission was made. PF 2050 refers to the *karamaraš* Barnuš at Makkaš, who seems to collect a flour ration for 6 men and 41 boys travelling to Susa.

2011, the scribe refers to a *medasumaš* which was sent to them in order to make the account. The same phrase at the end of the text in PF 1963 uses *mušin*. It is more difficult to decipher the terminology distinguishing between those documents needed to write an account. There are frequent references to the *halmi* of an official authorizing a transfer of foodstuffs.

How does the accounting actually work? Is it possible to reconstruct the process from these tablets? Hallock noted that some journal and account texts contained passages from other text categories of the PFT, but as there were only a few examples, no one attached any importance to the fact.[24] They were all single entries found in journal texts. In his 1978 publication of a further 33 Fortification Texts, Hallock showed that one journal text, PFa 29, contained 10 entries known from other tablets, out of a total of 27 entries.[25] This may allow us to pursue the idea that there is a connection between all of the tablets published by Hallock, and that the contents of the journal and account texts provide clues for the organization of this archive. It was Hallock's assumption that the rectangular account and journal texts were written in Persepolis, while the small, oval-shaped tablets were written at local storehouses etc. and brought to Persepolis, where they were copied. This must be right in principle. The question is whether we can discern the process in detail, and whether we can understand those pieces of information concerning the accounting which I mentioned above.

One clue, again, is provided by Hallock's observation concerning the reference of a figure from a journal text in an account text. PF 1943 is a journal text listing 11 items of distribution of grain for the place Hadaran. The total for year 19 is given as 26,157 quarts of grain. This is exactly the amount which occurs in PFa 32, which accounts for the provision (?) and withdrawal of grain at Hadaran in the 19th year. Line 9 lists 26,157 quarts of grain as the amount dispensed for that year. This means that account texts listing the total withdrawal of a commodity at a given place worked on the basis of the information given in the journal texts. Thus, an account text could be written only when the journal text was completed. That in turn depended on the officials responsible for the journals having

[24] All the tablet texts listed in Hallock (1969), 38, were found in journal texts: PF 1223 in PF 1944. 32–6; PF 1212 in PF 1943. 6–8; PF 774 in PF 1942. 1–2; PF 1150 in PF 1947. 46; PF 306 in PF 1957. 2–3; PF 989 in PF-NN 2342. 11–17.

[25] For the 'originals' of the entries in PFa 29 he referred to: PF 423, PF 1080 in ll. 14–16; PFa 24 in ll. 10–11; PFa 25 in ll. 42–4; PF 1677 in ll. 2–3; PF 1011 in l. 20.

been provided with complete information on the yearly movement of a commodity.

Preliminary investigation of the journal tablets indicates that these do not vary in form, but only in size, which is what we should expect if the journal texts did not need to be as distinctive as the account texts. Journal texts account for grain, flour, fruit, and wine—so far only two refer to animals. There are different kinds of journal texts, among them lists of entries of grain withdrawal at a given place. These always follow a certain order, beginning with grain withdrawals for priests or for use in a religious function, then withdrawals made on behalf of the king, for workers (groups and individuals), and as animal feed. The texts end with a statement about the total annual withdrawal at the place in question and the officials involved in the supplying and apportioning of the foodstuff. Other journals consist of a few entries of withdrawal of foodstuff, followed by what Hallock called a summary, listing the total stored, received in addition, withdrawn, and left over, followed by a statement of the account and the persons involved. A third variety of journal text consists of lists of individuals making a payment. In this case the text begins with the 'summary', then lists the individual contributions (supplying PNs and GNs) which make up the total sum (cf. PF 1952). Again, this is followed by the account statement: 'this is the whole account for the 22nd year. Afterwards it was made in the 23rd year' (PF 1952. 17–19). Some account statements in the journal texts remark on irregularities in the bureaucratic procedures. Thus, PF 1954. 17–19 comments on the total figure of withdrawal of wine at Šaramanda: 'included in it (are) 700 (quarts) Bakaparna received. He did not send it; his sealed document was not received. (What was) withdrawn was written down.' Clearly a withdrawal was normally made only when it could be accounted for by an authorized order. The scribe who compiled the journal for the total expenditure had to note that the amount was missing but that he did not have a document to certify that the 700 quarts had been removed on the order of Bakaparna. In the case of PF 1957, the grain left over from the previous year had not been accounted for and thus the scribe noted: 'Battiš and his companions [=the accountants] say: "Mirin-zana did not give us a sealed document of what was carried forward

in the 21st year"' (PF 1957. 35–6).[26] This must mean that documentation was needed for each of the figures supplied in the 'summary'.

4. Conclusion

At the centre of the transaction of a commodity was the storehouse. Here foodstuffs and animals (alive or slaughtered) were delivered and withdrawn. As PF 1858 indicates, accountants had to collect records of withdrawals of a commodity, divided into the categories of wine, grain, and animals, from a specific place. Withdrawals of grain were used as rations for workers, provisions for travellers, and food for animals. These withdrawals had to be authorized, and sometimes we find the authorization is specifically mentioned in the ration texts ('in accordance with a sealed document of Irtuppiya'). References to sealed documents for travellers are a common feature in the travel texts. Thus one text was required which authorized the issuing of foodstuffs. For members of the royal family and high officials such authorization can be identified in the so-called letters. When the ration was given out, one record was made for the storehouse to account for the withdrawal, while another tablet, a copy, served as a receipt: '1,800 quarts of flour, in the 22nd year, (which) Sandupirzana holds, Mišuradaša received. It was recorded on parchment. At Kurrimišda, entrusted to Dutukka' (PF 323, receipt text, inscribed seal, no date). The text recording the withdrawal in the storehouse was kept 'on file'. The choice between using parchment and clay tablets would have been determined by convention within the bureaucracy. All withdrawals of grain from a given storehouse were collected and sent to Persepolis, or to nearby offices in Kamenuš and Mattezziš.. There, they were listed in the journal texts. Entries in journal texts include texts from all categories except delivery texts (category 'B'). The chief classification of the transactions was by place and commodity. Problems arose when journal texts were delayed because all the information required

[26] Battiš is named in PF 331 as a person to whom 54 camels are being entrusted at the estate of Da'urisa. The tablet is sealed with Mirinzana's seal (PFS 57). Battiš is obviously employed by Mirinzana. The question is whether in his job as an accountant he is also in charge of 'collecting' animals (as tax?). For a letter of Mirinzana referring to accounting procedures in Elam see PF 1858. Battiš is stationed as a storekeeper (*ambarabarraš*) at Udarakka (PF 1957): in PF 1978 he trades two animals for grain there (cf. PF 306, where Battiš issues grain to an individual).

from a storehouse was not delivered. If figures for balances were missing, this was noted in the journal; texts referring to balances (C2 texts) were sealed by authorized persons like Parnaka (PFS 9), Ziššawiš (PFS 79), or Mirinzana (PFS 57). These were also the officials who ordered the issuing of foodstuffs in the so-called letters, and they may have been the starting-point for the moving of any foodstuff. They gave an order, which allowed a member of staff to collect a ration (for whomever) from a storehouse. There the single withdrawal was noted and filed, while the person collecting the ration was issued with a receipt. Annual withdrawals were recorded in a journal; sometimes these could comprise the total expenditure over several years prior to the final account, which was made at a later date. That could have happened for many reasons: problems collecting the tablets, incomplete accounts at the storehouse, a failure to send the records to Persepolis in time. Sealed documents of the high officials were collected (as indicated by label texts), constituting an additional reference and proof that amounts had been rightfully withdrawn.

Deliveries of foodstuffs and animals were also recorded (PF 58–137; category B). It is worth drawing attention to one scribal convention that we recognized in the journal and account text, the blank line before the total sum in the list of commodities delivered to a given place. These deliveries could include livestock, oil, flour, grain, sesame, and fruit, and amounts vary from very small (5 quarts of oil) to extremely large quantities (56,070 quarts of grain, PF 106). While large quantities can be identified as transfers from royal estates, smaller ones by individuals are more difficult to explain. One might wonder whether these could be tax payments, but Hallock pointed out (1969: 66) that wherever we have a commodity identified as payment of tax, it is invariably livestock of some kind. This issue has recently been taken up by Aperghis (1998), who suggests that grain may also have been used for tax payments. He supports this view by translating the term *bazi kara* as 'tax collector', rather than 'maker of a *bazi*-container'.[27] Aperghis refers to two texts, PF 443 and 451, where a tax collector is named as having received vast quantities of grain (which probably did not come from one source, but from several estates). If this were correct, then we might be justified in regarding some of the journal entries listing individuals and places alongside grain supplies as records of tax payments. PF

[27] Hallock (1969), 16, following Gershevitch.

57 records 4 sheep (?) taken as tax from a place, Maturban, and the letter PF 2070 confirms that Raubasa and his companions collected animals as tax from seven different parties (individuals and groups of people). Raubasa again appears as a collector of 574 small cattle in PF 2025 (C4 text). PF 2008 (account) lists a total of 539 sheep as tax. In PF 1495 Miššabadda and 31 men receive a flour ration of 1 quart each while collecting the tax of Udana.[28]

Accounts were written by officials and by local storekeepers. Often we find references in account texts to the fact that an account was made for the three officials involved in transferring the foodstuff. Possibly those 'account texts' sealed with personal seals, such as PF 2003, PF 2012, and PF 2011, were written *in situ*, and labelled 'account of the stockyard GN'. The figures from these texts would then be incorporated into account texts sealed with seal 12, listing only the total figures rather than individual contributions to a stockyard (e.g. PF 2010).

Quite clearly, scribal conventions are in operation in the account and journal texts, and it is likely that this is true for other categories of texts as well. Certain kinds of account text can be identified through purely physical markers. Seals and the seal position play an important role in this, and here the work of Garrison and Root (1996) is an invaluable aid in determining the use of seals in the Persepolis administration. Initial investigation of the tablet shape indicates that it did play a role in the identification of certain kinds of texts. While journal tablets vary only in size, reflecting their general use as accounts for withdrawals of foodstuffs, account texts show a considerable variety. Commodities referred to in the text can be identified purely by the tablet shape, while the use of certain seals, in our case seal 12, may distinguish between texts written in the office at Kamenuš and those brought in from outside (I suspect that this concerns texts with seal 120, for example).[29] Rectangular tablets containing texts beginning with the word *mušin* are concerned with the exchange of goods. They are all continuous texts, and the tablets have no seal. Further analysis is needed to demonstrate the correlation between tablet shape and contents, but my initial assumption, based on the above discussion, is that this

[28] Cf. n. 14. Cattle of Udana are referred to in PF 66 (delivery text). They are not referred to as tax, but if this was a common procedure, the deliveries would be understood as tax and there would be no need to point this out explicitly in the text.

[29] For seal 120 see PF 1965, PF 2001, PF 2079, PF-NN 2271, PF-NN 2262.

might be a way to get closer to an understanding of the workings of the administration and of the storage system of the tablets.

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13

Cuneiform Archives in Hellenistic Babylonia: Aspects of Content and Form

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1. Introduction

The cuneiform tablets from hellenistic and Arsacid Babylonia which have come down to us are in the tradition of the cuneiform practice of earlier periods. Beginning with the second half of the eighth century BC, a considerable number of such documents are available. From that time till the first century BC there are no significant gaps in the documentation available for Babylonia as a whole. But from place to place the situation may differ. In examining the last period in which the cuneiform script was used, it is necessary to see the connection with the preceding periods: to study cuneiform archives of the hellenistic period one must bear in mind the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. To date more than 15,000 cuneiform tablets of archival character have been published, from the eighth and seventh centuries to the fourth. Many thousands of clay tablets of this kind, housed in the British Museum and elsewhere, remain unpublished. Most of the Neo-Babylonian and later legal and administrative documents originate from archives of varying size, of which the largest comprise thousands of documents. They may be categorized as temple, palace, and private archives.

There are two large administrative temple archives containing thousands of tablets each, the archive of the Eanna sanctuary in Uruk, dating from the eighth and seventh centuries BC to Darius I

Note. For bibliography see p. 297.

year 2 (520 BC), and the archive of the Ebabbar sanctuary in Sippar, which dates from the middle of the seventh century to the second year of Xerxes (484 BC).[1] Of the other important Babylonian temples, such as that of Esagila in Babylon, no archival remains of the period have come to light: at the most, single tablets or small groups can be attributed to the archives of these sanctuaries. Why these archives abruptly came to an end is not known. The former theory, that this was due to a destruction of the cities or temples, has now generally been given up.[2] As far as palace archives are concerned, a smaller archive of the royal administration of Neo-Babylonian times was excavated during the German excavations in Babylon in the so-called *Gewölbebau* (vaulted building), part of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II. It remains mostly unpublished, apart from a little information given by Ernst Weidner.[3] From the late eighth to the middle of the fourth century BC we have a considerable number of private archives of different sizes, mostly family records spanning several generations (cf. Pedersén 1998: 181–213). A few of the larger ones may be mentioned as examples. The Egibi archive from Babylon, dating from the late seventh century BC to the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, is the largest of the private archives identified to date (Wunsch 2000). In addition to *c.*1,000 documents which have been published in different places, a considerable part of the archive still remains unpublished (estimates go as high as 3,000 documents). Then we have the *Ea-ilūta-bani* archive from Borsippa, extending from the seventh century BC to Darius I (Joannès 1989), the Murašû archive from Nippur, dated to the second half of the fifth century BC,[4] and the Kasr archive from Babylon, of the same period. To date only a small number of tablets have been published from the important Kasr archive, which was mainly uncovered during the German excavations (some items had been discovered earlier).[5]

Many more private archives could be mentioned, but the ex-

[1] For the first archive see Kessler (1991), 8–9; for the second Bongenaar (1997), 2–4.

[2] For Eanna see Dandamayev (1992), 169–72, for Ebabbar Jursa (1995), 2. See also Rollinger (1998), 339–73.

[3] See Weidner (1939); Pedersén (1998), 183 ff. (Babylon 7).

[4] Thanks to the efforts of M. W. Stolper, nearly all of the reasonably well-preserved 730 tablets and of the fragments have now been published; for the Murašû material see most recently Donbaz and Stolper (1997).

[5] Stolper has reconstructed and studied the Kasr archive: see most recently (with further literature) Stolper (1995); also Pedersén (1998), 184 (Babylon 8).

amples given above provide sufficient background to the material of the hellenistic period. In general there is no fundamental difference in kind between the archives of Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid times on the one hand and those of the hellenistic period on the other. In a number of instances archives extend from the last decades of the Achaemenid period into hellenistic times. This must always be borne in mind when we try to evaluate the material. The same holds true of the period when the Neo-Babylonian kings were replaced by the Achaemenid ones: there was no social and economic break in the sixth century, just as there was none in the late fourth century.[6]

We move on now to the archives of the hellenistic (Macedonian and Seleucid) and Arsacid periods.[7]

2. Contents of the Hellenistic Archives

At Ur there was an archive of medium size (U 17243) which provides a good example of the continuity from one period to another. The earliest document in the archive is dated to the sixth century (Nebuchadnezzar II, year 29 = 575 BC), the latest are from the Macedonian period (U 17243. 16 = IM 17801: Alexander III, year 12, unpublished; Philip Arrhidaios, year 7: UET 4. 43). Most of the documents are of Achaemenid date, a considerable number coming from the fourth century, including Artaxerxes III and Darius III (UET 4. 1–2; 25). It is a typical family archive documenting the economic activities of the 'barber' (*gallābu*) family, which included agricultural activities and the sharing of temple income rights.[8] The archive was found in a private house. Since it extends into the beginning of the hellenistic period it is rightly included here, though

[6] See also Joannès (1995) (with a list of archives).

[7] I formerly used the term 'early hellenistic' for the period from Alexander III (the Great) to the end of the 4th cent. (before Seleucus became king); however, during discussion of the present paper at the Oxford workshop Antonio Invernizzi pointed out that the phrase has different uses in the fields of archaeology and art history. He prefers to call these decades 'Macedonian' according to the ruling caste, which I accept.

[8] See Oelsner (1976), 314 ff. and nn. 13–15; also Van Driel (1987), 164–7; Pedersén (1998), 204 (Ur 4). For publication of the texts see Figulla (1949); Figulla erroneously ascribes some documents to the Seleucid period, despite the absence of the king's name (Figulla 1949: 5). The texts are pre-hellenistic administrative documents.

it is unclear why it came to an end: as there are almost no remains at Ur which can be dated later than the end of the fourth century, possibly the city was abandoned (Oelsner 1986: 73–7).

The most spectacular hellenistic archives available today are those from Uruk. At present nearly 700 legal and administrative tablets of the period (including some from the Arsacid period) are known from this location. Previously only a small number of legal documents from the later part of the Achaemenid period had come to light here, whereas there are a good many literary tablets from the later fifth and fourth century BC.[9] I shall not repeat here the remarks I made on the Uruk archives at the Turin meeting in January 1993,[10] but instead offer a few additions.

Most of the hellenistic Uruk tablets come from illegal digging in the first decades of the twentieth century. Only about 200 legal documents were found during the German excavations, 75 per cent of them in the Rēš sanctuary, the remainder in the Irigal sanctuary.[11] Scattered examples were picked up in different parts of the city area. In contrast to a large number of literary tablets of late Achaemenid, Macedonian, and Seleucid times found in the private houses in the east of the city area (marked Ue/Vab XVIII in the excavation plan), only a small number of legal documents were discovered in the same location, most of them not later than the early Seleucid period. Contracts excavated here and dated later are an exception (e.g. SpTU 5. 313; see Oelsner 2001: 485). Perhaps some of the illegally excavated private contracts also come from here; some examples are from the late Achaemenid period or even earlier.[12] But in another private house nearby a number of contracts had already been excavated in the middle of the nineteenth century by William Kennett Loftus (the first time that such tablets came to light). There is a high probability that this is the place where the largest of the Uruk archives from Seleucid times, the so-called Lâbâši archive, had been stored.[13]

[9] Published in SpTU 1–5. The last volume (SpTU 5 = von Weiher 1998) includes some additional legal documents of the 5th and 4th cents. BC (nos. 288 ff.); regarding these see now Oelsner (2001), 482–6.

[10] See Oelsner (1996), 101–12; also Wallenfels (1994), 4 n. 18; Kose (1998), 190.

[11] The only excavated tablets to have been published from both groups are those which came to Berlin upon the division of the excavated objects. For plans of the sanctuaries see e.g. Kose (1998), Beilage 48 (Rēš), 51 (Irigal).

[12] Published in SpTU 1, 2, 4, 5. The findspot is in the excavation plan at 'Parth. Ruinen': see Kose (1998), Beilage 1.

[13] It is the area of the so-called 'Parthian villa': see Kose (1998), 343–73, and for the

These facts make me doubt P.-A. Beaulieu's opinion that all the private documents come from the two large sanctuaries of hellenistic Uruk, those of Bīt Rēš and of Irigal.[14] Instead, I maintain that there were different kinds of archives: in private houses (as above and probably others, such as the Nanâ-iddin and the Dannat-Bēlti archives), but also in temples—tablets excavated in the Bīt Rēš and in the Irigal (the latter forming the so-called Dumqi-Ani archive, which mostly comes from the official excavations, but also includes illegally excavated texts).[15] It may be added that the latest known example of a contract, dated 203 SE = 109/8 BC, is a good illustration of the fact that documentary tablets have been found in a variety of locations. It comes from Qd XIV 5 of the excavation plan, i.e. far from the Rēš north of the Eanna sanctury.[16] It was common practice in Babylonia of the first millennium BC for both parties of a contract to receive a copy of the document. This explains the large number of duplicate tablets from hellenistic Uruk which have come down to us. As it is only rarely possible to identify the precise location where the tablets were stored, it is also impossible to say which of the copies originates from which archive, e.g. to identify, in the case of a sale, which copy belongs to the seller, which to the buyer. But more than once in Seleucid Uruk duplicates have been excavated in the same context.[17]

It seems impossible at present to estimate the number of hellenistic–Arsacid documents from Babylon and Borsippa. They are only partially published—at present a little over 200 documents, about half of them administrative (including letter-orders). The inventory numbers of nearly a hundred unpublished tablets are also known to me. The majority of the private documents come from Babylon, but there are others from Borsippa. Of the few tablets written in places like Kutha (see Oelsner 1986: 231–2) or Marad (?) (CT 49. 169), some may have been found in Babylon. The standard publication is

texts Oelsner (1996), 107 ff. and nn. 23–5. For the contents of the archive cf. Doty (1977), 188–228 (also 165–8). A number of the documents remain unpublished.

[14] Beaulieu (1994), 6 and n. 14. The author speaks of a 'Bīt Rēš archive'.

[15] For details see Oelsner (1996), with literature; cf. Doty (1977).

[16] Kessler (1984), 273–81. The findspot may hint at a residential quarter. For the excavation plan see Kose (1998), Beilage 1.

[17] See e.g. Sarkisjan (1975), 15 ff., nos. 2, 16. However, there is an earlier example in which two duplicate tablets clearly come from different houses: see SpTU 2. 57 (creditor) and Hunger (1970), 237 ff., no. 24 (debtor).

that of D. A. Kennedy, in CT 49 (Kennedy 1968).[18] With only a few exceptions, all of these were excavated illegally, and it is therefore impossible to reconstruct their original context. There are hints that at least some of the texts were found in the living quarters in the southern part of Babylon (Išān Aswad).[19]

The reconstruction of archives is possible only by internal criteria. By categorizing according to the persons involved in the transactions and the contents of the documents, one can combine tablets into groups and thus restore part of the original archive.[20] It is evident that in the nineteenth century, when most of the tablets were discovered, the original context of the archives was destroyed.

There are only very few hellenistic documents from other places. Of the tablets written at Larsa, one was excavated at the site of the Ebabbar temple,[21] while others—e.g. some late Achaemenid documents written at that place—were acquired along with tablets from Uruk, and therefore may presumably have been found also at Warka.[22] A few tablets of the Macedonian and early Seleucid periods (the latest dated year 39 SE = 273 BC) have been excavated at Hursagkalama.[23] Among the tablets which have been excavated in Kutha there seem to be some hellenistic examples (Edzard and Gallery 1980–3: 385). Others written at that place may have been found at Babylon (see above). Only one cuneiform tablet excavated at Seleucia on the Tigris has been published, possibly written at Kutha (Oelsner 1992: 345–6).

3. Types of Document

A considerable number of the texts from Uruk are sale documents; there are also donations, quitclaims, exchanges and divisions of property, but only rarely do other topics occur. The subjects of the

[18] I attempted a classification of the texts in Oelsner (1971); further remarks in Oelsner (1986), 194–201. A number of additions can now be made: see e.g. Stolper (1993), and Van der Spek (1998).

[19] See Oelsner (1986), 120 and n. 466; 112 and n. 414.

[20] For an example see Oelsner (1971), 168.   [21] See Oelsner (1995), 128–30.

[22] OECT 9. 26. For the Achaemenid period see Stolper (1990), 559–622, nos. 12, 20. Some unpublished texts are in the British Museum.

[23] Published by Langdon (1930), pl. xi W.1929.159, and OECT 9. 71–5; 10. 306. To these may be added OECT 10. 310 (the partly broken date can be restored as 'year 23/26/29 Seleucus and Antiochus kings') and probably some of the fragments with lost dates.

contract are mostly house plots and temple allotments (prebends). Slaves and fields are attested in the earlier part of the period—from Macedonian times up to the end of the fourth decade of the Seleucid era (*c.*270 BC). This seems to be due to administrative alterations within the Seleucid empire. There are very few other types attested; loans (of silver or barley) are found only up to the beginning of the Seleucid period. As there are a considerable number of later documents of more widely varied content, the restricted subjects of the earlier material will not be due to chance. Presumably in the later phases at Uruk other writing materials were used instead of clay tablets for documents pertaining to subjects not attested on the surviving tablets (see below, p. 294).

The topics of the private contracts from places like Babylon, Borsippa, or Kiš-Hur-sugkalama differ from those which had been written at Uruk. Prebends and slaves are not attested at all, fields only rarely, houses in very few examples.[24] In contrast to the documentation from Uruk, a good number of texts deal with loans (of silver or barley). In addition, there are some marriage contracts (Roth 1989).

There is a small number of administrative clay tablets from Uruk, some of them published by P.-A. Beaulieu and deemed to be part of a Bīt Rēš archive.[25] Most were excavated illegally and acquired in the antiquities trade. Of the few examples from the official excavations, one was found outside the sanctuary in a residential quarter together with fragments of a different kind.[26] Although we have to postulate the existence of administrative archives at the Uruk sanctuaries in hellenistic times, these were not excavated.

A considerable number of texts published in Kennedy (1968) form part of an administrative archive which, because of the content, I called the brewers' archive. It belonged to the Ezida temple in Borsippa.[27] Most of the texts are letter-orders, dated to the

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[24] The format of purchase texts differs from those at Uruk; this topic will be treated elsewhere.

[25] Beaulieu (1989). Some additions can be made, e.g. VAT 7841; see Oelsner (1986), 161.

[26] Van Dijk and Mayer (1980), no. 115 (according to an unpublished list of Van Dijk—the epigraphist of the 18th excavation—the findspot was at Ne XVI 4 of the excavation plan; see Oelsner 1995: 139–40; Kose 1998: Beilage 1).

[27] Oelsner (1971), 165–6, 167–8. See also Oelsner (1986), 225–6. Since then additional tablets have been published, but much remains unpublished.

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second half of the fourth century (Artaxerxes III to Alexander son of Alexander).

A number of tablets, among them ration lists, form part of an archive of the Esangila sanctuary,[28] spanning the period from Artaxerxes III to about 300 BC. In a group of administrative documents, mostly dated to 218/219 SE = 94/92 BC, there are several references to the Gula temple É.SA.BAD, so these may be part of the archive of that sanctuary.[29] Because of frequent references to the activites of a person called Rahimesu, this material is now called the 'Rahimesu archive'.[30] The documents refer to the income of the sanctuary and its distribution.

Another group of tablets record negotiations conducted before the *šatammu*, the head of the temple administration, and the *kiništu*, the administrative board, of Esangila and the Babylonians.[31] They are to be classified as protocols, as are two fragmentary tablets of the late Seleucid period from Nippur, both referring to the same temple allotment (prebend) and therefore presumably belonging to the same context.[32] There is also a comparable document from Kutha (BRM 1. 88).[33]

4. Formal Aspects

Generally speaking, the shape of the tablets of private contracts dated to the hellenistic period conforms to the convention for similar documents of the preceding period. Tablets which are sealed on the edges are thicker than those without seals, as space for the seal impressions is needed (*Ziegelformat* tablets). In Uruk the most

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[28] See Joannès (1982), 331–66; also Oelsner (1971), 165; (1986), 195–200; Beaulieu (1994), 6 and n. 14; Jursa (1997), 129 ff., nos. 50–4.

[29] See Oelsner (1986), 198 and n. 732; 442 n. 713. The texts are now edited by Van der Spek (1998).

[30] d.g. McEwan (1981*b*), 135–6 on l. 22, and now Van der Spek (1998).

[31] See Oelsner (1971), 164–5. Some of the texts were transliterated and translated by McEwan (1981*a*), 15–21 and *passim* (corrections: Von Soden 1981). See also Van der Spek (1995), 238–41, no. 9.

[32] Published by Van der Spek (1992), 250–60. Another tablet fragment excavated at Nippur is dated to the Macedonian period (Civil 1975: 133–4, 142, no. 28; see Oelsner 1986: 233 and n. 866), and there are two contract tablets of the Macedonian period with broken place names which seem also to be from Nippur (published by Stolper 1993: 73–7, no. A 2–3; 89–91, no. A 2–9).

[33] Transliterated and translated by McEwan (1981*a*), 21–4. See also Van der Spek (1995), 241–5, no. 10.

common shape is a rectangle of 'landscape' orientation (wide edge at top and bottom). If the text is exceptionally long, then the opposite ('portrait') orientation may be used. In the later Achaemenid period landscape orientation was used not only in Uruk but also in Nippur (Murašû), whereas the two known late Seleucid examples from that place have portrait orientation. The latter is typical not only in Ur up to the Macedonian period, when the tradition ends, but also in other places. In Babylon and Borsippa portrait orientation predominates. The convention is dependent on the character of the document. Lists are written on larger tablets.

The textual formulae employed are a continuation of the pre-hellenistic ones. There is essentially no change in the arrangement of the text. In the earlier part of the period the right edge may still be used for writing the ends of longer lines, but later on it is reserved for seal impressions. Whereas in most places the captions giving the owners of the seal are written in the direction of the shorter axis of the edge, this practice occurs in Uruk only up to about 300 BC. Thereafter the normal direction of the script on the edges is along the long axis.

The text of the contract may be arranged into paragraphs by dividing lines. The use of such lines depends on the use of standard formulae in the text: if a formula known from earlier times is being employed, the earlier scribal practice is continued. With the exception of sale documents from Uruk, where a new formula for prebend and house sales comes into use in the fourth and early third centuries, the traditional formulae are used. Often, but not always, the text of the contract is separated by an empty space from the list of witnesses. There may be another blank space (one or two lines deep) before the name of the scribe, the place of writing, and the date. This final section is generally written at the end of the reverse of the tablet; sometimes there follows a supplementary clause. Witnesses are always written on the reverse of the tablet, never on the obverse. If the text does not fill the whole of the obverse, its lower part may be left empty.

From the third millennium BC the sealing of tablets underwent several changes. In our period it was usually done in the same way as in the late Achaemenid period: that is, normally all the witnesses impress their seals, a practice which was developed in the later part of the fifth century BC. Usually the seals are placed on the edges of the clay, but if there is space available on the obverse or reverse, one

or other of the seals may be put there. However, in Uruk this holds true only for the earlier part of the hellenistic period. At that place the right edge of the tablet is reserved for the seal of the contracting party relinquishing any claim to the entity in question and for the name(s) of the guarantor(s). In other places there is some variation. Larsa follows the practice of Uruk, as far as one can tell from the few known tablets.

In the first millennium BC the 'fingernail' of the contracting party is often impressed instead of a seal.[34] This kind of 'sealing' is given up after the beginning of the third century BC, by which time a true seal is used. It is worth noting that in the late period normally only one nail impression is given, as against the groups of three fingernail impressions which may be repeated several times on the tablet up to the middle of the first millennium BC. In contrast to contracts, which by definition are deeds made between two (or more) parties and confirmed by witnesses, there are no witnesses on administrative documents such as notes of revenues, expenses, etc. Receipts may occur with or without witnesses—the former, in my opinion, being contracts, the latter administrative documents. Tablets recording single administrative acts are relatively small. As far as can be seen, they differ neither by shape nor by contents from similar documents of earlier periods.

Another kind of administrative document comprises lists, which are generally written on tablets of medium size. In the hellenistic period, as in former times, there are lists of persons, ration lists, expenditures, revenues, different kinds of distribution. Most of the examples are from the Esangila and 'Rahimesu' archives, only a few from Uruk. Normally administrative documents are sealed by the responsible official or officials. An interesting text, sealed by a larger number of persons, was publishsed by Jursa (1997: 130–3 n. 50).

Many of the texts from the brewers' archive are letter-orders. The term is applied to texts which formally begin with an epistolary introduction, while the topic is an order from an official (or some officials) to someone to give some commodities to a third person or group of persons.[35] Besides these, some letters more properly so called are preserved, mostly from the Seleucid period. In some

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[34] For the Neo- and Late Babylonian sealing practice in general see Oelsner (1978).

[35] For the system see McEwan (1981a), 150–1; for the 6th and 5th cents. also MacGinnis (1995); cf. Oelsner (1971), 165–6.

of them the *šatammu* of Esangila is the sender (Oelsner 1971: 166).
There was a long-standing convention in cuneiform tradition that
the sender of a letter sealed the tablet. If there are no seals pre-
sent, one must suppose that the letter was originally enclosed in a
sealed envelope, as in earlier times. There is one example where the
fragment of an envelope is preserved (Kennedy 1968: 118a).

4.1. *Writing materials*

In Uruk, besides the cuneiform documents on clay tablets, nearly
1,000 sealed *bullae* were found, many of them of the napkin-ring
type.[36] As far as one can judge from the excavation reports, they
were often found together with cuneiform tablets. This probably
indicates that the same persons who wrote on clay tablets also used
leather, parchment, or even papyrus for writing documents. This
is also proved by a *bulla* containing the name of a scribe written
in cuneiform (Oelsner 1996: 102 n. 7). As these materials are per-
ishable, the documents themselves are lost, and we have only the
sealed clay lump which was applied to the folded document.[37]

No comparable numbers of *bullae* from Babylon or Borsippa
are known, but thousands have been excavated at Seleucia on the
Tigris.[38] One may therefore suppose that with the exception of
Seleucia, most Babylonian cities were comparable to Uruk in the
use of Akkadian and cuneiform on clay for some kinds of document,
while for others a different writing material and indeed language
was employed (Aramaic and perhaps even Greek). While in the case
of the *bullae*, concerning whose content we can do no more than
hazard a guess, it is possible that comparable situations obtained in
the various cities. Why the cuneiform archives in Uruk and other
cities exhibit differences with regard to their content (see Section 3)
remains an unresolved question.[39]

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[36] For hellenistic sealings from Uruk see also Wallenfels (1996); Rostovtzeff
(1932).

[37] For details see Oelsner (1996). Note that at the findspots named C and E on
the ground plan of the Réš (Oelsner 1996: 111) no cuneiform tablets were found.
We cannot be sure that all findspots correspond to the original place of storing.

[38] See Invernizzi (this volume).

[39] Above (p. 290) I mentioned some of the different types of contracts found
in Uruk and other places. In dealing with the issue one should take into account
the use of different writing materials for different documents, although that does
not answer all the questions that arise. Rostovtzeff (1932), 50, stated that most of
the Uruk *bullae* are to be dated to the time of Antiochus III and later, and that

That clay tablets and leather could be used for the same pur-
pose is shown by two administrative documents from Babylon (in
Kennedy 1968):

CT 49. 144 . ^{im}*tah-sis-tu₄*, corresponding to
CT 49. 140. 6 ^{kuš}*tah-sis-tu₄*.

In other words, the same type of document ('protocol of a state-
ment in front of witnesses') can be written on two different writing
materials—in the former example the determinative meaning 'clay
tablet', in the latter 'sheet or roll of leather'.

The third kind of writing material used in our period, the waxed
wooden tablet, is often mentioned in literary cuneiform tablets, but
whether it was used for contracts or in the administration is an open
question (cf. Postgate and Baker, this volume).

Why was cuneiform writing abandoned? As far as can be seen, for
centuries cuneiform on clay tablets and the Akkadian language were
used side by side with the Aramaic language and its alphabetical
script. It seems to me that the former were bound to the cult of
the traditional gods and the functioning of the Babylonian temple
institutions. At Uruk the cuneiform documents excavated in the
sanctuaries stop about 150 BC (Irigal) or shortly after the Parthian
conquest of the region (Réš: VAS 15, no. 37), but there are later
texts too. The latest legal document excavated there dates to the year
109/8 BC. It was discovered outside the sanctuaries but refers to both
of those just mentioned.[40] The conclusion is that the destruction of
the sanctuaries by fire must have happened later (Kose 1998: 415).

At Babylon the situation is similar. The latest archive of adminis-
trative documents is the so-called Rahimesu archive (Van der Spek
1998: see above), for the most part dated to the years 94–92 BC. At
that time temples still existed.[41] But cuneiform was written even
later, into the first century AD, if not the second and early third
centuries (see Geller 1997). There is clear proof that many parts of
the the city were inhabited in the Parthian period (Hauser 1999),

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those attesting slave-sale taxes are not earlier than 92 SE = 220 BC (p. 69). The latest
cuneiform document relating to a slave sale is dated 37 SE (bearing an official royal
seal besides private seals). What of slave sales between 92 and 37 SE? They certainly
occurred in that period, but how were they documented?

[40] See Kessler (1984), 273 ff.. Other documents of the Parthian period written
at Uruk are from illegal excavations. An astronomical diary tablet for the years
100–98 BC may also originate there: see Sachs and Hunger (1996), 406–9, no. 99C.

[41] For references see Sachs and Hunger (1996); cf. Oelsner (1999), 328.

but the state of archaeological research in Arsacid Babylon is insufficient to allow further inferences.

No legal or administrative documents arc known in Babylonia during the later Parthian period. The few extant clay *bullae* from Babylon (Schmidt 1941: 794; Wetzel *et al.* 1994: *passim*)—traces of sealed douments written on leather, parchment, or papyrus—seem to be dated to the Seleucid period, like those from Uruk.

These facts lead me to the conclusion that the final abandonment of cuneiform script for all documents, including legal and administrative texts, cannot be separated from the fate of the Babylonian temples (see Oelsner 2002, discussing the evidence).

4.2. *Seals*

Seal rings (Akkadian *unqu*) are the commonest form of seal, used in the Seleucid period virtually to the exclusion of the alternatives. In the Macedonian and early Seleucid period there are a few examples of stamp seals and even cylinder seals (both are called *kunukku* in Akkadian). There is one example of a cylinder seal in the middle of the second century BC on a letter dated 58 SE = 254/3 BC (Kennedy 1968: 126).

In one instance there is the seal of a royal official on a private cuneiform contract (BRM 2. 10) (Oelsner 1996: 102 n. 9).

4.3. *Document-keeping*

There is virtually no information on how texts were kept in the archives. This holds true even for the excavated examples. In Mesopotamia there were different ways of keeping tablets. Private archives in houses were normally stored in clay jars, and this holds true for the texts from Ur. But there is no specific information that the same method was used in Seleucid Uruk. Tablets could also be put on wooden shelves or kept in special niches in the walls, but it seems that neither of these practices is recorded for legal and administrative documents of the hellenistic period.

5. Conclusion

It may be said of all the cuneiform texts of the hellenistic period that in principle they stand in the tradition of earlier periods, and in

particular there is continuity with the preceding late Achaemenid era. Some modifications do occur during the hellenistic period, e.g. changes to the formulae of purchase documents at Uruk, but the prevailing impression is still one of continuity. Sometimes peculiarities of the tablets, such as alterations in sealing practice, give hints as to the dating. One more significant development may be seen in the fact that some of the private archives were clearly stored in the sanctuaries, which happened only exceptionally in earlier periods. On the other hand, some peculiarities of the Uruk material may be due to modifications in the administrative organization of the Seleucid empire made during the reign of Antiochus I.

Our information on the temple administration is incomplete and restricted to a few specific details. The archives of the royal administration were probably in Greek and therefore do not belong here: in any case, they have not survived. The tradition that we have available to us ends shortly before 90 BC as far as the legal and administrative documents are concerned.[42] But this does not mark the end of cuneiform writing, which survives well into the Christian era.[43]

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[42] See now Geller (1997). Pinches (1902), 484, mentions cuneiform documents of the first two decades of the 1st cent. of the Christian era, but it is unclear what texts he has in mind. In Oelsner (1986), 291 n. 41, I assumed, perhaps wrongly, that he was referring to legal documents.
[43] Geller (1997); Oelsner (2002), 9–18.

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14

They Did Not Write on Clay: Non-Cuneiform Documents and Archives in Seleucid Mesopotamia

ANTONIO INVERNIZZI

When scripts other than cuneiform, such as Aramaic or Greek, and writing media other than clay, such as papyrus, leather, or parchment, became widespread in the Near East, new practical conditions came into being which had important consequences for documentary archaeological evidence, and which directly affect our knowledge based on this type of evidence. For the climate of Mesopotamia preserved perishable materials only in extremely rare cases. It is only as a result of exceptional circumstances that the Parthian parchments of Avroman (Minns 1915) and the Parthian and Roman documents of Dura Europos (Welles, Fink, and Gilliam 1959) have been preserved. In the Seleucid period, in particular, cuneiform tablets are still the basis of our knowledge (Oelsner 1986), and when later, in the course of the Parthian period, the cuneiform script and the clay tablet were finally abandoned, textual evidence was virtually extinguished.

Therefore, when we try to understand the way an archive of documents of perishable materials functioned and to define the nature of the relevant administrative practices, our evidence, though extraordinarily rich and varied in the case of sites like Seleucia on the Tigris, is severely limited by the total loss of the documents themselves. Their sealings may be extant, but these are no substitute for the original documents. Nevertheless, the sealings do

suggest a number of considerations and provide a large quantity of data for speculation.

Archaeological evidence makes it certain that documents of various kinds continued to be written and to be kept in archives as in the past, and shows that new materials were in common use in addition to clay. Characteristic clay sealings impressed with one or more seals, which had once sealed papyri or parchments, have been found in various sites of Babylonia (Rostovtzeff 1932; McDowell 1935). Most sealings were probably baked by accident in the fires that destroyed the documents written on these more or less easily incinerated materials. Seleucia on the Tigris gives ample proof of this, and we can confidently extend this evidence to other cases: the baked sealings sporadically found are likely to be the result of chance and not of an intentional procedure carried out with a view to their preservation.

Clay naturally continues to play a fundamental role in connection with the documents made of other materials which are typical of this late period: although it is no longer the only writing medium, it is used for sealing, in accordance with the ancient traditions of the country, where clay had been used for sealing goods and items of various kinds since prehistoric times, and was still commonly employed for this purpose in the Neo-Assyrian period (Herbordt 1992). A large number of Neo-Assyrian sealings are quite similar to those of the Seleucid documents in their general shape, and this suggests that the change in practice attested by the Seleucid documents is not so much an innovation specifically connected with new external cultural influences, but rather the natural adaptation of a traditional practice to the new circumstances connected with the change in language and script, and in the writing materials employed.

It is especially with the old tradition of sealing containers and goods of various kinds that the Seleucid sealings can be compared in their shape and function. The Seleucid age simply added papyri and parchments to the list of items that could be sealed with clay. The diffusion of these materials is something new, but the related practices are new only to a certain extent, for there is a fundamental continuity in the use of the seal as a means of authenticating the written document by means of a stamp. The primary purposes of the Seleucid sealings do not seem to be fundamentally different from those of the past or more generally from the sealing practices

of the cuneiform world. These purposes were those of identifying the persons or offices involved with the documents and with the relevant administrative files.

It has been suggested that the desire to conceal the written text should be excluded from the main aims of sealing the new documents, because the papyrus or parchment roll can be slipped off from the sealing, which incorporates the strings (McDowell 1935: 2–4). It is true that this purpose can only be carried out effectively and definitively by using the sealings described by McDowell as 'convex sealings', which were attached to specific types of documents, the double-version texts, which have an internal and an external version. This is the only really new category of text, though the final attribution of specific types of sealing to this kind of document needs more detailed research.

In these documents the text can be written twice on the two halves of the sheet, which are separated by a transverse row of small holes. One of the versions of the text, the inner one, is rolled up, tied with the strings threaded through the holes, and sealed by pressing a small lump of clay around the strings. Therefore this text is concealed, while the other version remains open and accessible, wrapped as it is around the sealed version for convenience of preservation. It is clear that access to the inner text of these documents is only possible after breaking the seals, and that only these documents provide an effective guarantee of the integrity of the text, preventing any illicit alteration of it.

However, although in theory it is certainly possible to slip the rolls from their sealings, and thus to read and alter the texts, this can hardly be considered a routine operation, and is not so easy to perform as it might seem. This becomes clear if we look at the few published photographs of papyri with their sealings intact (Vandorpe 1996: pl. 45. 1): not only are the strings wrapped tightly round the rolled documents, but the strings and sealings are multiple. On the other hand, a difference in the writing medium employed causes immediate differences. It was not *per se* necessary to seal contracts on clay tablets in order to prevent alterations, and the cuneiform text could remain accessible at any moment. The practice of impressing seals on the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid tablets had various important objectives other than the physical safeguarding of the contents of the text. Seals were impressed essentially as a control or authentication mark, as an additional means

of recognizing and guaranteeing that the text written by the scribe corresponded to the will of the people involved, a requirement which the seals impressed on the Seleucid sealings also satisfy.

Of course, while alterations would have been difficult or even impossible on a dried tablet, they could have been made more easily in texts written with ink and brush. So it is unlikely that the need to conceal the text and prevent corrections was totally absent, though it may have played only a secondary role. A comparison with the envelopes which conceal and protect the clay tablets could be suggested. It would, however, be a superficial and marginal comparison, for these envelopes may contain not only seal impressions but also summary information on the text.

No double-version documents have survived in Seleucid Babylonia, but there is no reason to think that this practice, attested by ample evidence in other parts of the hellenistic world (Vandorpe 1996), was not common in Mesopotamia too, where only cuneiform texts have actually been found. In view of their shape and general features, some of the sealings known today may once have sealed double-version documents.

The external appearance of the sealings can give us some information about the material on which the text was written, whether it was papyrus or parchment, and also about which substance was used for specific types of document, in spite of the loss of the document itself. Judging from the traces preserved on the backs of the clay sealings, which did not hang free but were attached to the document, it is possible to state that papyrus was much less frequently used than parchment. This is not surprising, for papyrus bushes did not grow in the country, whereas the raw material for parchment was easily available. Therefore, the papyrus sheets were certainly imported, while those of parchment may well have been locally produced.

The impression of the papyrus fibre covers the entire back surface of the sealings attached to papyrus documents (Figure 14.1 (*d*)), and is usually very clearly preserved. In no case are there fibre traces on the front side. This makes it quite unlikely that papyrus was used for double-version documents. For, if the free half of the papyrus sheet was wrapped around the sealed half, covering its sealings, it could hardly have failed to leave a trace, however faint, on the front side of the sealings, where the seals are impressed. The pressure exerted in wrapping the free half of the papyrus, on which the external
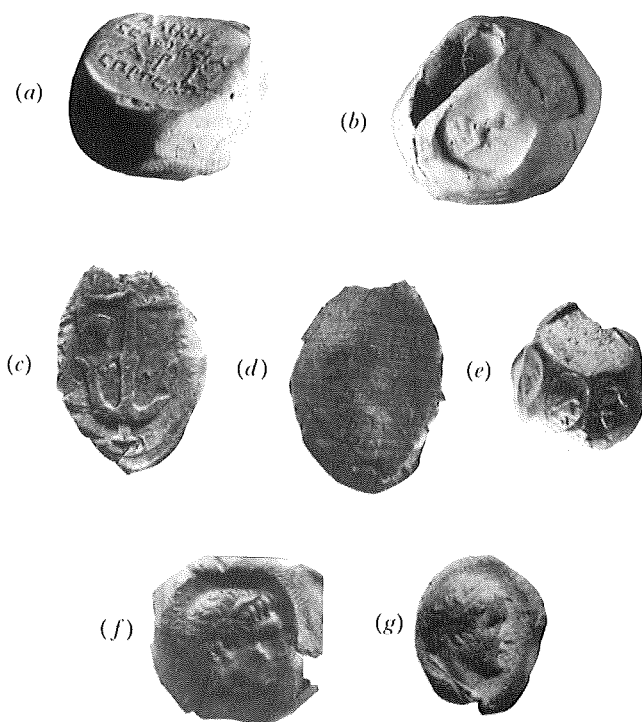
(a) Sealing with the stamp of the *halikē ōnē*
(b) Napkin-ring sealing
(c) Sealing with an official seal
(d) Impression of papyrus fibre on the back of the sealing of (c)
(e) Sealing with the stamps of the *halikē ōnē* and of witnesses
(f) Impression of the seal of the *chreōphylax*
(g) Impression of a seal with the portrait of Seleucus IV

FIG. 14.1. Seals and sealings from Seleucia

version of the text was written, around the rolled one was of course not equal to that required for binding and sealing the secret version. However, one would expect that, at least in some cases, the handling of the document would also have left some traces of papyrus fibres on the front side of the sealing, which was in very close contact with the sheet. This never happens on the thousands of sealings from Seleucia; only accidental fingerprints can sometimes be observed on

the front side, sometimes even on the seal pattern itself (Invernizzi and Papotti 1991). On the other hand, this accords perfectly with the fact that the 'convex sealings' impressed with a single seal, which McDowell attributed to double-version documents, do not show any trace of papyrus on their backs. We must therefore conclude that the use of papyrus for double-version documents seems not to be attested in Seleucid Mesopotamia.

It is interesting to note that in a number of cases sealings enable us to establish whether the relationship between the writing medium and the type of document was preferential or exclusive. For example, the evidence from the archives of Seleucia rules out the possibility that papyrus was used for the thousands of documents requiring registration by the *halikē ōnē* (Figure 14.1 (a)) (on this tax see Clarysse and Thompson 1995; Mollo 1996), or by other tax departments, for there are no occurrences of impressions of papyrus fibres on the backs of the sealings impressed with the seals of these departments. This too seems logical, for, judging from the enormous quantity of sealings of this type, the registrations involved must have been a very common administrative duty, for which the use of costly papyrus was probably not required.

Partly for the same reasons, we must rule out the possibility that papyri were rolled up and sealed with an enveloping sealing of the napkin-ring type (Figure 14.1 (b)). Not a single napkin-ring sealing from Seleucid Babylonia has the slightest trace of papyrus fibre on the surfaces of the central hole that were in contact with the rolled document. Some of these sealings frequently show impressions of seals with stylistic and iconographical motifs in the Near Eastern tradition, others bear the impressions of official seals, among them the stamps of taxes other than the *halikē*, or the seal of the *chreōphylax*, one of the most important Seleucid officers we find engaged in sealing documents.

However, evidence for papyrus is by no means infrequent in the archives of Seleucia. An important group of documents is sealed with an official seal whose motif is an anchor (Figure 14.1 (c)). This motif is found on a number of seals, and one of these seals is usually impressed alone on sealings which always show papyrus fibres on their backs. It is certainly an official seal connected with the Seleucid treasury, for the anchor is a symbol associated with this institution (McDowell 1935: 161–3). The documents so sealed, therefore, were written on papyrus sheets, and possibly originated

directly from an important governmental office which had this expensive material at its disposal, perhaps for drafting documents of a particular type. But of course, since the documents are lost, we cannot be sure whether the papyrus here simply had the function of stamp-paper required by public institutions for certain important but private administrative deeds (especially if the government had some kind of monopoly on the importation of papyri), or whether these were documents of an official nature.

The change of medium from the clay tablet to the sheet of perishable material and the consequent total loss of the documents naturally make it difficult to ascertain the existence of documents and archives. When not baked in a fire, the isolated occurrence of a sealing might easily have escaped excavators' attention in the past, and the state of preservation of the clay lumps at the moment of excavation may affect their identification even today. In unfavourable circumstances even the recognition of ensembles of documents in archives might be impossible. It is probable that not all documents were sealed, and possible that only documents of a given kind were sealed, perhaps in circumstances where it was recommended or required. But of course this cannot be established in the absence of the originals. Non-sealed documents and the archives of such documents are irretrievably lost and have left no trace of their existence in the excavations.

At any rate, the main difference with respect to the past is that, even where the evidence is positive, we never have archives of documents, but only archives of document sealings. The nature of this evidence thus severely limits our knowledge of documents written on perishable materials such as papyrus, leather, and parchment, and of the related archival practice and management in Seleucid Mesopotamia, for the nature of the documents cannot easily be inferred from their sealings. And yet even a single intact sealing can be evidence of the existence of an archive, however small, for the presence of a sealed document, no less than that of a tablet, implies a prime concern with preservation. On the other hand, thanks to official excavations, we sometimes know the context of preservation, which enormously increases the interest of sealings, whatever their limitations, as a source of information on archival practices, even though much has to be left to speculation.

Our knowledge is rather unbalanced from the point of view of the distribution, quantity, and representativeness of the evidence. The

sealings known today which prove the existence of documents and archives are far from being distributed uniformly throughout all regions of the country: they are mainly concentrated in a few centres in Babylonia. I am not aware of any sealings of this kind having been found so far in excavations in northern Mesopotamia. Of course, it is not prudent to draw direct conclusions from an argument *ex silentio* like this; nevertheless, this evidence does prompt some reflections.

Apart from the relative fortuitousness of every discovery, this picture may in the first place be connected with the fact that the excavations which have led to the discovery of extensive occupational levels of the Seleucid period are situated in Babylonia (Oelsner 1986: 257–8), especially in Seleucia on the Tigris and Uruk. Isolated sealings are also known at Babylon and Nippur (Oelsner 1986: 257–8; Gibson 1994), where the chronology seems to range from the Achaemenid to the Parthian period; and at Larsa as well, where a few sealings were found in a Seleucid level in the Ebabbar area (Lecomte 1987: 233–5, pls. 48–9). Some of these sites, it is clear, are unusual, even unique, since Seleucia was the first capital of the entire empire, Babylon the old metropolis of the country, which continued to play an important role under the Seleucids and the Arsacids, and Uruk a city to which the Seleucid kings devoted special attention and care, the only centre where we know of a building plan comparable in importance and character to the great projects of the past.

Larsa has revealed substantial evidence showing that it maintained its urban status, and that its sanctuary continued to enjoy a prominent role in Seleucid Babylonia on the cultural and economic levels, and, we may imagine, also on the administrative one. We may suppose that archives of non-clay documents existed in other provincial centres, where documents may have been written and preserved, though not necessarily sealed. This possibility must be left open for northern Mesopotamia too, though that area had lacked primary political and administrative centres since the fall of the Assyrian empire. Since the continuity of life did not cease, the fundamental practice of local administration must have continued, and archives of non-clay documents may have been formed in different centres of the north. On the other hand, the unequal distribution is paralleled by the evidence of clay tablets, which in post-Assyrian times come mainly from Babylonia.

So these differences in the archaeological evidence are probably not the consequence of different administrative systems in the two parts of the country. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the evidence available comes from Babylonia, where the crucial centres of the economy and the administration were located. In Babylonia too this evidence allows us a glimpse of conditions and features which differ in some respects from one site to another; differences probably connected on the one hand with the obvious differences in the sealed documents, on the other with the nature of the individual archives and the sphere to which they belong. Therefore, it is likely that local conditions influenced administrative practice and archival procedures, leading to minor differences between the small centres, the provincial capitals, and the metropolis, Seleucia; but that the principles of the procedure were basically the same all over the country.

Archives have actually been brought to light by excavation only at Seleucia and, to a lesser extent, Uruk. At Babylon there are only a few sealings, which were not found in their relevant context—i.e. in archives, the original place of preservation of the documents—but in secondary locations, almost always on the surface. Despite this, they probably prove the existence of at least two different archives, one perhaps of a private, the other of an official nature, for of the five sealings published (Wetzel, Schmidt, and Mallwitz 1957: 43–5) one was found in Merkes, and may once have been part of a personal or temple archive, while the remainder come from the Qasr, and possibly were originally preserved in an archive of the South Palace. Only building activities of the Achaemenid kings are known here from archaeological evidence. However, these sealings may suggest a continuity of official functions in this place through Alexander, who intended to make Babylon his capital, and Seleucus I, who had his first residence there.

As far as sealings in particular are concerned, the possibility of a close relationship between the findspot on the surface and the existence of archives in some place nearby finds some support in the archaeological evidence. At Seleucia the excavation of the archive building was preceded by the finding of single sealings before the existence of the building was suspected and its remains found; and the archaeologists of the American expedition had already collected individual sealings in the area which we now know was the archive square. The original place of preservation of these scattered sealings

was probably the large archive building excavated in 1966–72 by the Italian expedition (Invernizzi 1985, with bibliography). In this specific case it is easy to understand the reason for the displacement of the sealings: in Parthian times new buildings were erected on the site of the archives, and building work was responsible for these sealings finally coming to lie in the upper layers or on the surface.

At Uruk some of the sealings were brought to light by the excavation of the large city sanctuaries Bīt Rēš and Irigal (Jordan 1928; Oelsner 1986: 258). This may also be the provenance of some of the sealings acquired at different times by various museums on the antiquarian market. However, in view of the importance of the city as an administrative centre, and given the existence of archives of tablets in houses, it would not be surprising if, in addition to the temple archives, there existed personal archives of papyri and parchments, just as there existed personal archives of clay tablets. The features of these archives could probably be clarified by a comprehensive study of the Uruk material, which still remains to be carried out. The Uruk sealings are scattered in various museums, and even those found in the German excavations and preserved in Berlin have received only superficial publication. Understandably, this class of objects first attracted the attention of scholars because of the seals impressed on them, and only in more recent years has interest arisen in the functional aspects of sealings and in their importance as a possible source of information on administration, economy, etc.

At any rate, at Uruk tablets and sealings were found together in the same temple archives. This has already been noted (Oelsner 1996), and must be particularly stressed, for it makes it very clear that in principle the choice of each kind of document—that is to say, either of a cuneiform text on a clay tablet or of a text written with ink and pen on papyrus, parchment, or leather—is not simply connected with choices of a cultural nature, but with circumstantial facts, such as the type of text that was to be written and the requirements of different kinds of administrative practice. This is even more interesting when compared with the evidence available at Seleucia.

Only one cuneiform tablet has been published with a provenance from Seleucia, though the text was originally written at Kutha (Doty 1978–9). The Michigan Mission found some tablets at Seleucia, which are now preserved in the Kelsey Museum at Ann

Arbor but remain unpublished. I am not aware of any documents with a presumed origin from Seleucia having been bought on the antiquarian market. The only tablet to have been published was found during the Italian excavations in the archive area, not in its original place of preservation, but on the surface. Nevertheless, I have elsewhere (Invernizzi 1996: 136–7 n. 26) suggested that this tablet, which is fragmentary, may originally have been preserved in the archive building, though at the time of the fire that destroyed the building this archive contained many papyri and parchments, as is indicated by the number of sealings (more than 25,000), but certainly did not contain a single tablet. The date of this document, 225/4 BC, falls within the initial period of the full functioning of the archives, which is indicated by the dates of the tax stamps impressed on the sealings. Moreover, it is not alone among the documents of the archives in having an origin extraneous to the city, nor is the nature of its contents (the dedication of a slave to the temple of Nergal) unique.

At least one of the thousands of papyri or parchments may reasonably be supposed to have originated from outside the city, though the reasons why it was preserved in the city are difficult to explain in detail: there are two sealings impressed by the same cylinder seal with a device consisting of the *mušhuš* of Marduk and a brief cuneiform inscription, certainly related to the Babylonian temple (Invernizzi 1985: n. 115; Invernizzi 1994a: fig. 1). These are both appended sealings, and there is no way of establishing whether they once sealed the same document or two different documents. However, at least one, if not two, of the thousands of texts in the archives of Seleucia seems to have had something to do with an institution in a different city, though it is of course impossible to state with any degree of certainty whether the lost document originated from Babylon—like the tablet from Kutha—rather than from an office in Seleucia or from a Seleucian citizen closely connected with the Babylonian institution.

The subject of the Kutha tablet also has some similarities with the subject of other documents from the archive sealed by the stamp of the *andrapodikē*, a tax on slaves. It must be remembered that tax stamps consitute the great majority of the seal impressions at Seleucia. They usually concern the *halikē*, but a small number relate to the tax on slaves (on which see McDowell 1935: 175–9; Mollo 1997). Of course, we do not have any information on the

documents themselves, and on the surviving part of the tablet there are no seal impressions. The practices connected with the subject of the tablet and those connected with the parchments sealed with the *andrapodikē* stamp may have been very different. But whatever the administrative situations may have been in the two cases, they concern a similar subject. Judging from the seal impressions on the Uruk tablets (Wallenfels 1994; 1996), where there are no such tax stamps, it is likely that no official registration by these stamps was required for the practice concerning the tablet, or that, if such registration was required at a different stage in the procedure, it may have been the subject of a separate deed.

The situation at Seleucia is certainly enviable in many respects. The evidence here is fairly complex and extraordinarily rich and varied, and not only from the point of view of the documents. Almost all the known sealings with a provenance from this city were found during regular excavations. Seleucia has suffered in recent years from the progressive erosion of the archaeological ground by the peasants of the neighbouring villages, but in the past damage from illicit activities was much more limited here than in the great Sumerian centres, not least because of the scant attention paid by the antiquarian market to the later periods of Mesopotamian history. Moreover, the material of verified provenance almost all belongs to archives whose context is known thanks to excavations, or must be in some way connected with these archives. It is clear that the information value of sealings depends heavily on their belonging together in an archive and on the possibilities of knowledge provided by the context in which they are found.

Three archives are known in the city, and they differ greatly in nature and importance. Two were brought to light by the Michigan University excavations in dwelling-houses of block B (McDowell 1935). This was excavated in its entirety for the Parthian period, but only in part for the Seleucid level, to which both archives belong. They are both small private archives which, judging from the *halikē* stamps, the most frequent seal impressions in both, may have been the property of dealers or other persons mainly trading or dealing in salt, an activity which appears to have been particularly important in Seleucia, where it involved a variety of people, including officers of the public administration. One of the two archives is complete, the other is not; that is to say, the room housing the first was excavated completely, while part of the second room was

left unexposed, so that it was impossible to collect all the sealings making up this archive.

The third archive is a huge public one which, after intense activity in the last quarter of the third century and the first half of the second century BC, was completely destroyed by a fire during or a short time after the second reign of Demetrius II, in the third quarter of the second century. The building stands a little to the south of Tell 'Umar, the main tell of the archaeological area concealing the remains of a theatre, and was excavated by the Turin mission. It may be termed a public, city archive (Invernizzi 1996), in the sense that it did not belong to a private or religious institution, but was accessible to members of the entire community of citizens who wished or needed to preserve their documents, or copies of them, in it. The storing facilities were provided by the administration, perhaps in connection with other services required by the administration itself. Certainly this was a building expressly built and equipped for the preservation of documents, and on a large scale, for it was capable of housing many thousands of documents in its rooms, a capacity which does not seem to have been entirely exploited when the great fire devoured all the documents stored in it.

This extraordinarily rich evidence has yet to be matched by adequate information. The catalogue of the seal impressions is still being prepared, and this is only preliminary to the analysis of the distribution pattern of the sealings in the different rooms of the archive, which should help considerably to clarify the archival practice. By contrast, the few hundred sealings from the private archives A and B were promptly published by McDowell, who studied some fundamental aspects of them, but all this needs be reconsidered, today, from the strictly archival point of view, which was left in the background in McDowell's study, and in the light of the new evidence offered by the city archives.

In any case, it is important to stress that there were different kinds of archive in the Seleucid city, as had been the case in the past in Mesopotamia, and that this points to a clear continuity. At the same time, the great public archives are something completely new, obviously connected with the great changes in the social and political structure, and more specifically with the more radical changes in the administration which the Seleucid age brought about in comparison with the great historic transitions of the past. The first important novelty is that this is a huge building expressly built for

preserving documents, most of them probably private, in a public place, in the agora or one of the agoras of Seleucia, undoubtedly the main agora, located in the heart of the public quarters of the city, just south of the theatre (Invernizzi 1994*b*).

However severe the limitations imposed on us by the fact that the documents themselves are lost, it is nevertheless possible to state that the archives of Seleucia have no connection with the great archives of the past: they are not royal archives directly related to the king or the palace, nor are they temple archives. Nor are they comparable to private archives like those of great family enterprises such as the firm Murašû & Sons, in spite of the abundance of 'private' seal impressions (though this qualification remains to be investigated), for the building stands on public ground and is not part of a dwelling compound, or of a private administrative structure.

If the documents preserved in the archives of Seleucia had not been completely lost in the fire, and had been written on clay, so that we could read them, they might offer an extraordinarily vivid and varied illustration of different aspects of life in the town, and enable us to see a diverse multitude of citizens engaged in businesses of various kinds and in the relevant administrative practices, of which the stamps preserved on the sealings give us only a glimpse. Or perhaps these texts would chiefly give us a monotonous list of the names of agents all signing the same text or a few standard texts, since the great majority of the seal impressions are one or other of the two variants of the *halikē* stamp, one for payment of, the other for exemption from, the salt tax, differing only in formal details from year to year, but always referring to the same administrative question. For although these stamps are seals of a branch of the public authority, the documents themselves were generally private deeds, probably concerning activities of a commercial nature, whose principal agents were private; deeds at any rate which required the intervention of the public authority, at least for registration, perhaps for more complex and substantial reasons.

It is not always easy, however, to understand the relationship between the people using the seals and the document that is sealed. Tablets may give us the names of the owners of the seals; sealings can sometimes reveal the function, but never the name, of the people using the seals. The distinction between public and private seals, too, is not always clear. In particular, on at least some of the

sealings which probably sealed witnessed contracts, the seals commonly linked with witnesses may well have been impressed not by people closely connected with the contractors themselves, but by professional witnesses, in other words by a kind of semi-public official.

This is the case with most of the seals impressed on the same sealings as those with the *halikē* stamp. The stamp of the *halikē ōnē* occurs either in isolation or together with several figured seal impressions on the same sealing (Figure 14.1 (*e*)) (Invernizzi 1968–9: fig. 81. 35, 63, 66). These figured seals associated with the seal of the *halikē* are usually interpreted as private, and attributed to the contractors and their witnesses. However, the fact that all three archives, the two private ones and the public one, are partly made up of the same kind of documents, sealed by the same types of sealings impressed with the same seals, and the fact that not only these seals themselves but their association is the same, may provide a clue to the interpretation of this kind of evidence.

The stamp of the office dealing with the salt tax, the *halikē*, is obviously present in all archives because all the relevant deeds required registration by this office. If in the private archive there is only one stamp per year, this is clearly because the owner of the archive used to register just one deed every year. If in the public archive, by contrast, a number of documents are attested for every year, this is because the same practice was probably carried out every year by a number of different dealers.

It follows that none of the figured seals regularly associated with the *halikē* stamp is likely to be the seal of the agent, or contractor if a contract is involved, because the private archives show that agents/contractors probably registered only one deed per year. Therefore, these are probably the seals of the witnesses or officials required by the specific registration practice of the documents. Since different agents all have recourse to the same witnesses, it is clear that these are very particular witnesses, witnesses accredited at the *ōnē*, officials of a semi-public or even a public nature, whether or not they were employees of the *ōnē*; at any rate, professionals having no specific personal links with the businessmen. If so, the businessmen do not seem to have necessarily impressed their personal seal by registering their deeds at the *ōnē*.

The great majority of the documents preserved in the city archives required the intervention of an official authority, whether public or semi-public. The variety of the seals, whether public or private, which have no relation to the *halikē ōnē*, and the shape of the sealings, which differs from one type to another, are certainly an indication of a variety of administrative subjects and practices. I shall not attempt a complete survey, but shall merely mention that some documents were sealed by the *chreōphylax* (McDowell 1935: pl. I. 2), and others by the *bybliophylax* (McDowell 1935: pl. I. 1). Today these officers are little more than a name and a seal pattern to us. However, there is no doubt that they occupied some of the most important posts in the Seleucid empire.

The seal of the *chreōphylax* probably always kept the same pattern at Seleucia, the portrait of the founder of the city, Seleucus I (Figure 14.1 (*f*)); this pattern also occurs on sealings in the private archives A and B. The duties of this high officer are not clear, but in a small number of cases his seal was impressed together with the stamps of departments of the taxation system, especially with that of the *andrapodikē ōnē*, as is shown by sealings from the city archives (Mollo 1997). This does not necessarily imply that the *chreōphylax* had specific jurisdiction in fiscal matters. Some practices evidently required registration both by the *ōnē* and by the *chreōphylax*, whose activity is also attested at Uruk, where his seal shows a number of different patterns (Rostovtzeff 1932).

Another sizeable group of sealings shows impressions of a seal that is relatively large and is therefore likely to have been of an official character. This is also suggested by its pattern, an anchor (Figure 14.1 (*c*)) (McDowell 1935: pl. I. 5). Because the anchor is virtually a symbol of the Seleucid treasury, or of one of its departments, perhaps these sealings again refer to documents in some way connected with those furnished with the *halikē* stamp, where there is a half anchor among the additional features completing the inscription (McDowell 1935: pl. II. 17–23; Invernizzi 1968–9: fig. 81). However, the nature of the relationship between the two groups of documents is not at all clear, if there ever was such a relationship. In general, these sealings are stamped only with the seal bearing the anchor pattern. One of these seals, judging from the impressions of fibre on its back (Figure 14.1 (*d*)), was normally attached to papyri, as described above. But this unfortunately does not tell us anything about the specific nature of the document.

It is even more difficult to establish the meaning of the seals whose pattern is the effigy of a ruler. There are a considerable number of

portraits of the Seleucids (Invernizzi 1985; Fleischer 1996), though
their identification is often problematic; portraits of kings of other
dynasties seem not to occur. It is quite possible that not all the
large portraits are actually of kings, even where this would seem
to be suggested by their size and by the quality of their execution.
That seals bearing a royal portrait do not necessarily have a direct
relationship with the person of the king portrayed is certain at least
in the case of the seal of the *chreōphylax*, which shows a portrait of
the deified Seleucus I (Figure 14.1 (*g*)) (McDowell 1935: pl. 1. 2;
Mollo 1997: figs. 8–9): the royal subject here is perhaps connected
with the fact that the officer was probably a royal appointee. His seal
is closely connected with his duties in the city; the *chreōphylax* of
Uruk has other patterns, though still official ones. So we may con-
fidently state that the sealing procedures of the documents sealed
by the *chreōphylax* were carried out at Seleucia. This is probably
also true of other large portrait seals impressed on sealings of the
napkin-ring type.

On a considerable number of sealings we find a single impression
of a seal whose pattern is the portrait of a ruler (Figure 14.1 (*g*)).
This feature is also common in other archives of sealings of the
hellenistic world, e.g. at Nea Paphos in Cyprus (Kyrieleis 1996)
and Callipolis in Boeotia (Pantos 1985; 1996). The evidence of the
Callipolis archive, in particular, is especially instructive because we
know the context of its preservation, the house of the *stratēgos* of
the Aetolic league. It was connected with a public officer, though
its place of preservation was not public, and it contained official
documents, perhaps correspondence and texts sent by sovereigns
and other public figures. A number of sealings show the impression
of a single portrait seal, and these may be compared to the corre-
sponding ones at Seleucia. Occurrences of individual portrait seals
at Callipolis are usually rare.

By contrast, the frequency pattern in the archives of Seleucia is
striking. Only a few occurrences (or even just one), are attested for
some royal portrait seals, and these sealings may also have sealed
letters or documents of royal provenance; in other cases, however,
there may be large numbers of sealings all bearing the same royal
portrait seal impression. There are unlikely to have been such a
large quantity of royal letters in an archive where most of the seal-
ings were connected with the salt tax. The evidence might be inter-
preted more generally on the analogy of the portrait seals stamped

on sealings of the napkin-ring type, where the variety of the seals
rules out the possibility that they sealed letters. In other words, the
evidence could be interpreted as indicating the presence of a consid-
erable number of documents emanating from court or government
personages in their capacity as officers of the royal administration
in the provinces and cities of the empire, e.g. at Seleucia. There-
fore, the documents sealed with the royal portrait alone would not
be letters originating from outside the city, from the king in person,
but from high officers or dignitaries who had the right to use the
king's effigy on their official seal.

On the basis of the inner features of the archive, a local Seleucian
origin may be suggested, if not for all, then at least for most of the
original seals, both because of their mode of manufacture and be-
cause of the manner in which they were impressed on the sealings.
Undoubtedly local in both respects are the tax seals, which con-
stitute the vast majority of occurrences, as was mentioned earlier.
This also indicates a local origin for the seals associated with them
on the same sealings. Among these we find seals of Babylonian and
hellenistic style. Moreover, there is no reason why the seals of the
chreōphylax and *bybliophylax* should not have been locally made
and impressed. Iconographical and stylistic comparisons between
these certainly local seals and the remaining seals present quite a
varied picture of the styles and the quality of the intaglio engravers.
But this is not surprising in a metropolis of the size and importance
of Seleucia.

However, within all this variety some particular tendencies can be
detected. It can only be mentioned briefly here that certain subjects
are very common and are executed in a linear, schematic style. Their
characteristics suggest that they were almost mass-produced. This
large-scale production may suggest not merely that there was a
need in Seleucia for a large number of seals on demand from a large
section of the population, but that, at least in some cases—those
with specific motifs frequently occurring in official contexts—there
may have been some sort of connection with specific departments
of the public administration.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that the archive building was not
simply a place for preserving documents. Some of them, though it
is not easy to say which ones, were probably sealed in the building.
The finding of a few small lumps of clay of the same type as that
used for the sealings, and similarly baked in the fire, shows that

one of the services provided by this institution was that of sealing documents. It is of course difficult to say now whether this service was carried out by employees and officers at the request of private citizens, perhaps for the documents that were deposited for safe keeping, or whether it concerned all kinds of document or one specific kind.

Among these various possibilities, it may reasonably be suggested that the last-mentioned one—that some specific kind of document was concerned—was at least the case with the documents sealed both with the *halikē* stamp and the seals of 'professional witnesses'. If the above interpretation of these seals is correct, it is reasonable to imagine that every year the various different dealers—there seem to have been hundreds of them in certain years—came to register their own deed in the office of the official or employee who had custody and use of the *halikē* stamp, where the necessary 'professional witnesses' must also have been present. We may even wonder if the office or room where the sealing operation was carried out was in the archive building itself. After sealing the document, the person concerned deposited it for safe keeping under the care of the archive management in the building, and took away with him a copy for his own files for preservation in his own office or house, as is shown by archives A and B.

These are just a few reflections suggested by the sealings found at Seleucia. They will of course need to be verified by the distribution pattern which we shall be able to draw when a complete classification of the features shown by the individual occurrences has been carried out. On the whole, it seems that the concerns of the papyri and parchments sealed and deposited in the archives were mainly different from those of the contemporary cuneiform archives. Most of the documents preserved in the city archives, in particular, and lost in its fire, were probably economic, or juridico-administrative, in content; certainly none contained literary compositions, which there would have been no reason to seal.

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15

Greek Archives: From Record to Monument

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'Archive' as used in a classical or hellenistic Greek context has a significantly different denotation, in respect of format, location, intention, and audience, from its use in a Near Eastern context. Comparison will best be served by a straightforward description of what we have, together with some attempt to sketch the underlying procedures, assumptions, and values. I shall confine myself to Greek documentation of the archaic, classical, and hellenistic periods, and shall not broach the rather different phenomena and problems presented by the documentation from Roman Italy of the Republic, the Roman empire in general, or Graeco-Roman Egypt.[1]

For three reasons, no simple picture of Greek documentary records can be satisfactory. First, though Greek cultural unity was real, Greek political society was a mosaic of well over 150 pieces (some would put the figure much higher), each with its own procedures, although family resemblances and predominant patterns are visible. Second, the recovery of literacy in or by the mid-eighth century BC had far-reaching consequences. Though levels of literacy varied by gender, class, region, and period,[2] while much (but not all)[3] public and private business could be carried on by non-literates, literacy was widespread enough by the fifth century BC,

Note. For bibliography see p. 340.

[1] Cockle (1984), Burkhalter (1990), Haensch (1992), 210 n. 1, and Moatti (1993) provide a route into the Roman documentation.

[2] The bibliography on levels of literacy in classical Greece is endless. Principal contributions by Harvey (1966), Cartledge (1978), Harris (1989), 45–115, Thomas (1994), and Robb (1994).

[3] For example, the Athenian institution of ostracism assumed that at least 6,000 out of an adult male citizen population conventionally estimated at 30,000 could

if not earlier, to generate not just the public or private documents which survive directly, or the works of literature which survive indirectly, but also the kinds of writing, such as laundry lists and graffiti, which reflected confident informal literacy. Third, extant documents owed their creation and survival to various intended and unintended processes. Those processes created 'documents' (singleton written utterances), 'dossiers' (groups of documents on a single theme, gathered together for some purpose), and 'archives' (assemblages of 'documents' retained systematically for some reason), while processes within the public domain differed from those which pertain to individuals, families, or private groups. (The public/private distinction is itself problematic, for, as will be seen below, certain private transactions came to be deemed to need storage or record within the public domain.) The first task, therefore, is to survey the processes which underlie our extant Greek public documentation.

1. The Process of Creation

The first essential was that a decision, whether by king, council, people, or any other component of the polity, should be seen as a nameable entity. Its status (ordinance of god, human decision, description of codified practice) varied with time and place, as did terminology (*rhētra*, *tethmos*, *dogma*, *psēphisma*, *nomos*, etc.), but the basic reification was general.

The second step was to need a record of that decision, and to create a system for making such records. Initially the function was entrusted to memory, either by being sung or chanted or by assigning to office-holders called 'remembrancers' (*mnēmones*) or 'sacred remembrancers' (*hieromnēmones*, as at the Pylian Amphiktyony and elsewhere) the specific task of remembering judicial or political decisions.[4]

scratch a name legibly on a potsherd (cf. Harris and William 1989: 114). In other respects a literate assembly secretary could do most of what was needed.

[4] For *mnēmones* see the material in Thomas (1996), 19–25; for their role at Paros Lambrinudakis and Wörrle (1983), 303, 328 ff. (with comparisons with their role at Paros' colony Thasos in the light of *IG* xii suppl. 347 III). For chanted laws see the material and references collected by Thomas (1996), 14–15. Cf. in general Vansina (1985) for some cross-cultural evidence, but Henige (1974) for the conscious or unconscious processes of distortion intrinsic to oral memory.

The third step was to transfer the record to writing. Possible reasons include a breakdown of memory, an increase in the material to be retained, or chicanery on the part of *mnēmones*. Some Greek polities reached that point by or soon after the middle of the seventh century, while others cannot be seen to have done so till much later. A notable and by now much-quoted instance is the creation by a Cretan city *c.*500 BC of a hereditary position of scribe (*poinikastas*), whose role was 'to write down and remember the affairs of the city, both secular and divine'.[5]

A fourth step was to keep the record in some permanent or semi-permanent form. The underlying distinction was between records which were to be kept indefinitely and records which were envisaged as being temporary. The classic example of the latter is the 'whitened boards' on which Athenian officials of the classical period kept draft documents or draft accounts, by writing in charcoal on them.[6] Though there are references to such boards being consciously 'archived' by being deposited in a public record office, their prime use seems to have been to record ongoing transactions during the period of office of the committee in question, such records being either wiped clean, when the debt or due instalment was paid, or monumentalized on stone if the public interest required. Though vulnerable to abuse,[7] the system continued through the classical period.

The fifth step was to display all or part of that written record in some permanent form in public. Though the social values underlying such 'Public Words' are fundamental, the practice had limitations. Even those polities, such as Athens or Delos or Delphi, which were most inclined towards the 'epigraphic habit' could not possibly display *all* their records in public. Hence, the Greek epigraphist has continually to ask 'Why is this document a document?', or 'Why has some person or body of persons decided that this particular ut-

[5] *Ed. princeps* by Jeffery and Morpurgo-Davies (1970); text in *SEG* xxvii. 631 and in *Nomima* i. 22: recent discussion in Thomas (1996), 21–5, whence the translation. Cf. also *Ath. Pol.* 3. 4 for the Athenian *thesmothetai*, with Stroud (1978), 22.

[6] Cf. Ar. *Wasps* 349 and 848; And. 1. 84; Aisch. 3. 39; Dem. 25. 70; Isok. 15. 237; Lys. 26. 10; *IG* i³ *passim* (see index of *sermo atticus* s.vv. *pinakion*, *pinax*, *sanidion*, *sanis*). Fuller study of these terms is needed; Posner (1972), 97 ff., is to be used with caution.

[7] The standard example is the tale of Alkibiades wiping out the notice of a court case in which he was involved (Athen. 9, 407 b–c), but the anecdote shows distortion and anachronism, and is probably part of the posthumous *damnatio* of Alkibiades (Hatzfeld 1951: 132–3; Boegehold 1972: 27 n. 20; Thomas 1989: 39 n. 79).

terance should be committed to writing in permanent form as an inscribed and displayed object cut in stone or bronze?'

For completeness' sake I subjoin, as a sixth and final step, that set of human or natural processes which determined whether what was once a 'document' in terms of the fourth or fifth stages survived for some scholarly record of it to be made. The history of those processes of direct or indirect transmission or its interruption, ranging on the one hand from inertia to antiquarianism, on the other from earthquakes to Christian iconoclasm, must be left aside here for reasons of practicality.

One final comment is in order. For the communities whose collective behaviour and decisions we are reconstructing, 'documents' were already a reality when a record was transferred to writing. Indeed, some Greek polities used the word *graphos* or *grammata* or the like to denote such records, thereby explicitly flagging their written nature. For the scholar, however, 'documents' are those which have survived. Hence, our 'archives', extant documents grouped in classes, differ from what a community of antiquity viewed and treated as 'archives'.

It may help the non-specialist if I indicate how many Greek epigraphic documents survive in the various genres, from which ostraca and words visible on vases as part of the painted decoration are conventionally excluded. The total number of epigraphic documents written in Greek and surviving from the eighth century BC until the early seventh century AD must be well over 200,000. That is a wild guess, for no one keeps the score, the number increases inexorably every year, and the number of unreported or unpublished finds is unquestionably high.

Their geographical distribution is very uneven. Those published in *IG* from Athens and Attika, for example, approach 15,000, with many more published elsewhere or still unpublished, while those published from Sicily number just over 600 (though subsequent discovery has probably doubled that figure). Moreover, the distribution of such totals by genre is equally skewed. Of the 397 inscriptions from Akarnania published in *IG* ix²/1, 2, for example, a mere 19 are decrees, while 329 are gravestones. The figures in *IG* ii/iii² for post-403 Athens show some 1,369 decrees, edicts, and *leges sacrae*, rather over 300 accounts published by administrative boards, some 800 lists of names of persons exercising some pub-

lic function, about 300 private leases, about 2,500 dedications, and some 8,000 gravestones.

Though inexact, such figures usefully highlight the numerical preponderance of dedications and gravestones which Athens shared with all other Greek societies. They also show how few categories of document can appropriately be classified as 'archives'. Most obviously, though gravestones not infrequently cluster within a family grave plot, or just outside a town gate, to use the word 'archive' is less apt. Likewise, though modern scholars rightly wish to treat as an 'archive' a group of private dedications made to a particular deity within a particular sanctuary, no such intention can be predicated of the original dedicators.

It is less easy to deny the status of 'archive' to groups of documents which have been used for the same purpose and discarded at the same time. The ostraca—potsherds scratched with the names of politicians whom individual citizens wished to see exiled for ten years via ostracism—are a prime example. Though some are singletons, most of the finds from the Kerameikos (8,653), the Agora (1,145), and the north slope of the Akropolis (190) were groups recovered from wells, dumped en masse once counted.[8] The unity of the material is therefore both intrinsic (contemporaneous documents serving the same function) and adventitious, deriving from their having been dumped together rather than from their having been preserved together: they constitute, as it were, anti-archives.

None the less, there remain cases where one can detect deliberate movement, on the part of creators or curators, towards archivization, codification, the creation of dossiers, or monumentalization. Each of these processes needs some analysis and illustration.

2. Archivization (I): Public Documents

Since this is the most complex of the four processes, it will be clearest to start from what became common established practice. Greek polities created various kinds of public archive or public record office. Terminology primarily denoted an archive of documents on papyrus, though materials could include parchment, 'whitened

[8] For details on the Kerameikos see Willemsen and Brenne (1991), for the Agora Lang (1990). Basics on ostracism in ML 21, but references to the vast literature best in Willemsen and Brenne (1991), 147 n. 5; add Rhodes (1994) and *OCD*³ s.v.

boards', or very occasionally bronze tablets. Their contents included decrees of state, royal decisions (letters or edicts), treaties, and occasional legal decisions of major importance: other categories are noticed below. The (separate) decision to 'publish' a document by inscribing it for public view was taken only for a minority of documents, the text thus 'published' being often an abbreviated version of what had been 'archived'.[9]

None the less, the implication was that, with public documents as with inscribed gravestones or dedications, what was being displayed was the primary document. It is unclear when or how the later practice developed, of archiving a primary text and displaying a copy only. Argument has focused mainly on late fifth-century Athens. On the one hand her headlong development, and her management of an Aegean empire, generated far more public documents than were ever cut on stone. Moreover, many of them needed to be kept available for reference, and indeed (as the Methone dossier described below shows clearly), were so kept and consulted. Consistently, two decrees of 405 refer to administrative documents filed 'in the public office'.[10] On the other hand, the language of public decrees could imply that the stelae on which documents were inscribed *were* those documents. As late as spring 377 a carefully formulated decree of the utmost public importance could specify 'if for any of the cities which are making the alliance with Athenians, there should happen to be unfavourable stelae at Athens, the Council which is continually in office has authority to pull them down', as if to demolish the stelae was *ipso facto* to rescind the enactment.[11] Nor was the practice purely Athenian, for at the start of the Third Sacred War in 355 the initially victorious Phokian general 'excised the [anti-Phokian] verdicts from the stelae and annulled the writings concerning the condemnations',[12] thereby illustrating the ambiguity under discussion.

Though no precise 'solution' to the problem is available,[13] the general direction at Athens is clear. By the end of the fourth cen-

tury BC at latest there was a reasonably well-organized public archive, located in the precinct of the Mother of the Gods, the Metroön, wherein documents were lodged and could be found. The best illustration is *IG* ii². 971, an Athenian decree of 140/39 BC honouring Telesias of Troizen for services to Athens but also recalling that an ancestor of his

had been crowned during the democracy [- - -] by the People with a golden crown, and [having taken] citizenship [in accordance with the] decree which Stratokles son of Euthydemos of Diomeia pro[posed, for both himself] and his descendants preserved strong and true [for the People] his good will: and [Onasos] displayed [the decree of the People] pre[served] in the Metroön [concerning him: by good] fortune resolved [etc.].

Stratokles' decree is likely to belong in the last decade of the fourth century, at least 160 years previously.[14] Yet it could be found—the system had worked.

3. Archivization (II): The Erosion of the Public/Private Boundary

So far 'archivization' has concentrated wholly on public documents, but without attempting to follow the selective transformation of temporary memoranda and working drafts through to lapidary public record. Proper treatment would require a book to itself.[15] Such transformations are currently seen to stem from the need to satisfy accountability for the handling of public monies or public property, though since extant versions are clearly copies (sometimes incomplete copies) of the 'original' perishable documents, there is at least a significant symbolic element in their publication on stone.[16]

However, once public record offices were established they came to be used for other purposes which crossed the public/private

[9] Klaffenbach (1960), 5 ff., against Wilhelm (1909). Exhaustive bibliography and discussion in Boffo (1995).

[10] *IG* ii². 1. 29: decree of Patrokleides, And. 1. 79.

[11] *IG* ii². 43 [='Tod ii 123], 31–5. Other examples from the 5th and early 4th cents. in Kahrstedt (1938), 29 ff.; Klaffenbach (1960), 30, and Boffo (1995), 102 n. 37.

[12] Diod. 16. 24. 5, with Klaffenbach (1960), 33.

[13] It can be followed from Curtius (1868), Keil (1902), 188 ff., and Heuss (1934) through Kahrstedt (1938), Klaffenbach (1960), Boegehold (1972), Thomas (1989),

60–83, West (1989), Sickinger (1994a; 1994b), and Boffo (1995) to Pritchett (1996), 33 ff.

[14] Basic list in Dinsmoor (1931), 13–14, with Habicht (1997), 71 n. 14. The latest possible date is 292. Minor amendments to *IG* ii². 971 in *SEG* xxix. 120; xxxii. 134; xxxv. 175. The example comes from Keil (1902), 191.

[15] Cf. meanwhile Hedrick (1993), Davies (1994), Harris (1994) (summary in *SEG* xiv. 248), and Davies (1998).

[16] For a classic statement see Bousquet, *CID* ii. 256.

boundary. Those purposes and usages were various, and in some cases highly contentious. I begin with Epikouros, the founder of the Epicurean school of philosophy. As has long been known, towards the end of his life (he died in 271/0) he deposited his will in the Athenian public record office, the Metroön. More recently Clay has shown that subsequent citation of the dates of his writings and private correspondence in terms of Athenian archons entails that copies of them were also deposited in the Metroön and were filed by archon-year, thereby confirming Boeckh's hypothesis that documents were normally stored thus.[17] However, as the only *privatus* known to have acted thus in Athens, Epikouros may simply have imitated his philosopher predecessor Herakleitos, who deposited his book of philosophy in the temple of Artemis (D.L. 9.6).

In fact the practice of depositing certain categories of private document in a public archive may have different roots. A letter to the magistrates of Dyme in Achaia, now known to have been written in 144 or 143 by Q. Fabius Q. f. Maximus Servilianus, concerns 'the burning and destruction of the city offices and of the public writings', in a context of 'the writing of laws opposed to the constitution which was given to the Achaians by Romans', of 'the worst state of affairs and disorder', of 'lack of mutual intercourse and *chre*[- -]', and of acts 'alien both to the freedom which has been accorded in general to the Greeks and to our own policy'.[18] Though the restoration of the fragmentary word '*chre*[- -]' as *chre[okopias]*, 'cancellation of debts', has now been effectively challenged, some unacceptable aspect of the situation is clearly being alluded to, and a reference to debt of some kind remains a plausible possiblity. Indeed, while it is hard to see what the insurgents stood to gain by destroying written copies of the allegedly anti-Roman laws which they had instigated, the destruction of debt records would make sense.

For all the uncertainties, the episode carries several messages. First, archivization is not neutral: it is done for reasons, which may (as here) reflect a social power structure and may be partisan. Second, if records of private debts were indeed involved, at least for Dyme tidy-minded ideas of the public/private boundary yield

to a harsher and messier reality. Third, it prompts the question whether archivization elsewhere in the Greek cultural area showed comparable characteristics.

The provisions of a lengthy, recently published decree from Paros in the Aegean suggest that it did.[19] Unauthorized alterations of various kinds had been made to documents, serious enough to justify the severest penalty, that of obliteration by curse (§§ II–III). The stable door was being bolted by means of a new elaborate procedure of public transfer from one set of magistrates to another (§ IV). Copies were to be systematically made (§ VI). Public inspection of the copies was to be permitted periodically, though only under very stringent safeguards (§ VIII), and the rules for the new procedure were to be publicly visible (§ IX). Just what scandal had erupted is left carefully vague, but it has to be assumed that some Parians at least had stood to gain or to lose substantially enough to justify tampering with the archives. Nor were Dyme and Paros alone in having to deal with such problems, for there are other known instances from Myra in Lykia and from Ephesos. Other examples will no doubt emerge.[20]

Debt was not the only trigger. Even if the evidence from Hellenistic Egypt is left aside, other categories of private transaction which generated documentation deemed appropriate for archivization and/or public display may be cited briefly. First, publicly inscribed records of the manumission of slaves survive from several polities of mainland Greece, such as Athens in the 330s and 320s, Delphi from 200 BC into the Roman period, West Lokris, Thessaly, and Bouthroton in northern Epeiros. Such public recording probably served the double purpose of accounting for public revenue and of protecting the manumittee's new status.[21] Second, from the early fourth century onwards Athenians protected loans secured

[17] D.L. 10. 16–22 (reference to the Metroön in 10. 16), with Clay (1982). Boeckh's hypothesis ap. Curtius (1868), 23, and Clay (1982), 22.

[18] *SIG* 684 =Sherk (1969), 246, no. 43, with Asheri (1969), 97 n. 62, for initial scepticism, Ferrary (1988), 186–99, for the redating, and especially Kallet-Marx (1995) for autopsy of the stone, new readings, and a substantial reinterpretation.

[19] Lambrinudakis and Wörrle (1983), whence *SEG* xxxiii: 679, there dated c.175–150 BC.

[20] Myra: Lambrinudakis and Wörrle (1983), 308 n. 130, with *SEG* xxxiii. 1177. Ephesos: *IK Ephesos* iA. 4. 24–32 (Ephesian debt law, c.297/6).

[21] For Delphi *SGDI* 1683 ff., with Klaffenbach (1960), 38–9, and Davies (1984), 262, for references to more recent work and to the various interpretations. For Athens *IG* ii². 1553–78 as revised by Lewis (1959). For W. Lokris *IG* ix². 1. 612–43 and 785 (Naupaktos), 671–92 (Physkos), 708–13 (Phaistinos), 715 (Tolophon), and 752–6 (Amphissa). For Bouthrotos (inscriptions from the theatre and the 'tower of inscriptions') *SEG* xxxii. 623; xxxv. 666, 696; xxxvi. 560bis–566; xxxviii. 468–517; and xlix. 473–96, with Cabanes (1976), 399 ff., 534–92. For Thessaly (Larisa) *SEG* xxix. 531–2 and xxxi. 577–83, etc.

on real property by recording the details (date, creditor, debtor, amount) in writing on a stela. The practice ceased after the late third century, probably because the registration of such debts was subsequently transferred to the public archive.[22] The comparable procedures in place at Ephesos by the 80s BC[23] were probably far from unique, while at least by the imperial period, and at least in Asia Minor, grave rights might similarly be archived publicly.[24]

A common thread emerges. The public registration, copying, or display of private transactions stemmed from the interplay of interests in respect of property and status, whether on the part of landed proprietors, to establish good title, on the part of persons (especially ex-slaves) whose status might need protection, or on the part of the state, for fiscal purposes. That any such interest could generate anxieties acute enough to trigger the sorts of acts attested at Dyme or Paros needs no emphasis.

To these procedures law codes were an exception, partly because their display on public view began earlier than for decrees, partly because the text thus displayed was more likely to be the authoritative text, partly because they led the movement towards monumentalization. Familiar examples include the constructions called *axones* and *kyrbeis* on which the law code of Solon of Athens was inscribed,[25] the Great Code of Gortyn on Crete,[26] and the wall(s) on which was inscribed Nikomachos' recodification of Athenian law from 410 to 399.[27] Yet, such codifications tend not to be what they seem. They are not so much the full body of substantive law on a particular topic or activity, as aspects of procedural law, or specifications of prescribed sacrifices, or role descriptions for a magistrate: even the so-called Great Code of Gortyn is selective and self-contradictory. Just as the Codex Hammurabi and others may

project royal self-definition rather than practically applicable law, and even if the practical inconveniences of revising a lapidary text are left out of account, such 'codifications' as publicly displayed monuments primarily expressed civic self-definition and the symbolism of law, not its day-to-day application. They are better seen as monuments, in the way explored below, than as texts.[28]

4. The Creation of Dossiers

From 'codification' to the creation of dossiers is a short step. The concept of 'dossier', long used in Greek epigraphy, denotes the practice of selecting from the 'archives' documents which related to a particular theme and of juxtaposing them for display. Examples abound. The first one I refer to is a stela from the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens which carries the texts of several Athenian decrees concerning the town of Methone on the southern Macedonian coast.[29] The first, probably of late 430 BC, cuts Methone's tribute payment to a nominal sum and provides for a protective démarche on Methone's behalf to King Perdiccas of Macedon. The second decree, of summer 426, gives Methone the privilege of importing corn each year through Hellespont, and makes other provisions for relations with Macedon. The third decree is an undatable torso, while the heading of the whole dossier implies that a fourth decree of early 423 provided for its publication. Three points emerge. The first is 'archival'—copies of these decrees could be found and used in a later year. The second is administrative: conscious decisions to 'publish' were needed. The third is political: to create this dossier and to display it publicly was to send a message both to Methone and other Athenian allies in the area ('we shall look after your interests') and to King Perdiccas ('do not harass our allies').

A second example from south-western Asia Minor preserves the text of three city decrees on one *stela*.[30] The first, of 367/6, records the measures taken by the city of Mylasa to punish an envoy who had betrayed the regional satrap Maussollos, notably by transferring his property to Maussollos and calling down curses upon him. The second, of 361/0, punishes men who had damaged a statue of

[22] For Athenian Horoi see Finley and Millett (1985): xxii–xxx and 118–93, with *The Athenian Agora*, xix (1991) H1–H131. For Ephesos see *SIG* 742, with Lambrinudakis and Wörrle (1983), 323.

[23] Ephesos: *SIG* 742. 49 ff., with Asheri (1969), 71–3; Lambrinudakis and Wörrle (1983), 323.

[24] Cf. the provisions protecting a dedicated *hērōon*, entered in the record offices of Patara and Pinara (*TAM* ii. 247, Patara, AD 146), with Klaffenbach (1960), 40, and Lambrinoudakis and Wörrle (1983), 326.

[25] For the debate about their physical shape and function see Dow (1961); Stroud (1978), 23–7; Stroud (1979).

[26] *IC* iv. 72, re-edited in Willetts (1967). Reconsiderations of format and purpose in Davies (1996).

[27] On which see Dow (1960) and later references ap. *IG* i³. 236–41.

[28] For this direction of argument see Thomas (1996).

[29] ML 65 = *IG* i³ 61. For the stela see *ATL* ii. pl. 1.

[30] *SIG* 167 = Tod ii. 138 = *IK Mylasa* i. 1–3, with Hornblower (1982), 68 ff.

Maussollos' father. The third, dated in 355/4, describes the penalties paid by other men who had plotted against Maussollos. This is not recording for recording's sake, but is sending three messages publicly but implicitly: one to Maussollos, to emphasize the city's loyalty to him, a second to potential future opponents, to warn them off, and a third to the city populace, to affirm that the owners of confiscated property had firm right to title.

A third example from Priene comprises nothing less than an 'archive wall', created on the inner surface of one of the *antae* of the doorway of the pronaos of the temple of Athene Polias. The wall, some 6 m. high, carries public documents ranging from royal letters of Alexander and Lysimachos, arbitrations of boundaries by external polities, to Roman *senatus consulta*. Its *raison d'être* is patent: this was where Prienians set up every document which confirmed the status of the city from its formal refoundation by Alexander, together with everything which confirmed its property and privileges. It was none the less selective, for at least one clause of a territorial arbitration decision which was unfavourable to Priene was carefully omitted from the inscribed version.[31]

Lastly, a dossier far removed from conventional Greek microstates, viz. a set of letters sent by successive kings of Pergamon in western Asia Minor to Attis, priest of the temple of Kybele at Pessinous in Phrygia, over 350 km to the east in the borderland between Pergamon's newly extended kingdom and the troublesome incomer Galatians.[32] They are very candid documents indeed, clearly not meant for any kind of public promulgation. In RC 55, dated in Eumenes II's 34th year (163 BC), he urges Attis to ask for as many soldiers as he needs, 'and if you can take Pessongi by treachery, write me what is needed, for as the place is holy it must be taken by all means'. RC 56 is Eumenes' response to Attis' report of the

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[31] Edition of the documents mostly in *I. Priene*. Detailed discussion in Sherwin-White (1985), with note of the omitted clause on p. 80.

[32] *OGIS* 315 = RC 55–61 = Virgilio 1981, with further references in RC; Virgilio (1981); Mitchell (1993), 27. RC 61 is also translated in Austin (1982), no. 208. Other illuminating dossiers are (1) *IG* ii². 360 (five Athenian decrees in honour of Herakleides of Salamis), with Rhodes and Lewis (1997), 24–5; (2) *IG* ii². 330 (three Athenian decrees in honour of Phyleus), with Rhodes and Lewis (1997), 25–6; (3) Laffi (1971), 3–53 (five imperial and other letters to Aizanoi in Phrygia about relations with temple of Zeus); text reprinted in Moatti (1993), 108–10; (4) *SEG* i. 329 = Oliver (1965), 143 ff. (five letters of legates of Moesia, about the frontiers of Istros), reprinted in Moatti (1993), 113–14; (5) Ploutonion at Nysa: *SIG* 781; RC 9 and 64.

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misbehaviour of his brother Aioiorix, RC 57 is a fragment, RC 58 is Eumenes' note of approval of the news conveyed by Attis' envoy, RC 59 is a similar response to a letter conveyed by the same envoy, while RC 60, so allusive as to be incomprehensible, hints at coded letters and cloak-and-dagger activities. Lastly, RC 61 comprises Attalos II's vivid description to Attis of his privy council's debate about the wisdom or otherwise of acting towards the Galatians independently of Roman power and preferences. We know of this (un)diplomatic correspondence only because for unknown reasons the dossier was inscribed on three marble blocks well over a century later.

5. Monumentalization

The term 'monumentalization' describes the widespread tendency to create a document which was also a monument, often of some artistic quality. The quality might stem from the letter forms or from their disposition on the stone, for some masons could create masterpieces of carving-cum-calligraphy. More often, however, it concerned the design of the block which carried the words, where the norm came to comprise a tapering or rectangular stelae, up to two metres high, carrying the inscription on one or more faces. The growth of the tradition needs closer study, but probably derives partly from the formats of dedications and statue bases, and partly from archaic monumental gravestones, for both genres commonly carried the names of dedicant or deceased on the base of the stela. Once the need for displaying longer documents emerged, it was convenient to adapt that format by reducing the statuary or bas-relief component to a decorative motif while giving the inscribed surface pride of place.

As before, examples abound. I cite five, in order to show the variety both of physical format and of genre of material. (*a*) In summer 454 the Athenians transferred from Delos to Athens the seat of administration of the alliance of Aegean states which Athens had been controlling since 478/7. Of the annual tribute which was currently being collected from some 150 states, $\frac{1}{60}$th was thereafter given to the goddess Athene as a tithe. In order to record those payments to Athene, a huge marble stele (height at least 3.583 m., width 1.105 m., depth 0.385 m.) was prepared, and was used for

the next fifteen years for that purpose. Its surviving fragments (over 180) have been painstakingly reassembled to form what is now called the First, one of the most spectacular documents of classical Athens, of seminal value for the historian of the Athenian empire.[33]

(*b*) Throughout the fifth and fourth centuries, the Athenians set up communal public gravestones to commemorate deaths on active service in a single year or campaign. They lined the roadway just outside one of the city gates. One survives virtually complete, while others can be approximately reconstructed. One gravestone provides an example, which can be dated with high probability to 447/6, when Athens suffered a serious defeat at Koroneia in Boiotia and lost control of Boiotia. Though the defeat rated a mere single sentence in Thucydides (1. 113. 2), its scale is visible from the monument. Comprising five stelae, each listing the dead of two tribes, *c*.1.30 m. high and no less than 10.40 m. wide, the monument with its record of 550–850 casualties will have been as prominent as its message was sombre.[34]

(*c*) One of the Athenian stelai, mentioned above, recorded manumissions of the 320s. Face A, cut first, carried about 125 entries, face B about 140. Whether each face represents a year's manumissions is unknown, but the clear intention was to set up in the Agora an ongoing record of publicly recognized manumissions, set out in monumental, indeed honorific, style.

(*d*) Much activity at Delphi in the fourth century concerned the reconstruction of the temple of Apollo, seriously damaged in an earthquake in 373/2. Towards the end of the century, with the work largely complete, the city of Delphi set up a huge commemorative inscription on three slabs. The first has perished, but the other two (now *CID* ii. 31–2) survive intact.[35] Though barely legible, its content carried an important message: the city itself was recording in annalistic format its contribution to the rebuild. It was both monument and chronicle, recalling other 'temple chronicles' which survive from the Greek-language area. Parallels from the Near East come readily to mind.

[33] Text now *IG* i³. 259–72, with ML 39. For a depiction of the stela see McGregor (1987), 62, pl. 2, and *ATL* i, pl. 1.

[34] For the stela see the publication in Bradeen (1964), 26, of what is now *IG* i³. 1163.

[35] See *FdD* iii. 5, pl. III, which gives a better idea of the slab as a whole than the crisper but more fragmented photographs in *CID* ii.

(*e*) A recently excavated example of monumentalization comes from Aphrodisias in Caria. This 'archive wall' displays 16 separate documents extending in time from 39–38 BC to AD 239, mostly, as at Priene, recording the decisions of higher authorities concerning the status and privileges of the city (Reynolds 1982: 33–7). As with the document from Priene (see above, p. 334), such sets of documents may be regarded as examples both of archivization and of monumentalization.

6. Locations

As the examples quoted show clearly, there were two preferred locations for public documents: the Agora (assembly place, later market place) of a city, or a temple/sanctuary. Though Athens placed much of her public documentation in the Agora, the Greek world tended to prefer temples and sanctuaries for all genres of document. The reasoning was simple. Such locations offered divine protection: to tamper with documents so placed was a crime against the gods as well as against men. They also offered practical protection, both because sanctuaries had priests, sacristans, or public officials to look after them, and because they were among the first places in post-Dark Age Greece to have monumental buildings. These were not only temples, for sanctuaries also came to need treasuries for valuable dedications, stoas for accommodation or daytime shade, and straightforward storehouses. Documents on papyrus or bronze could therefore be kept safely in them: documents cut on separate stone stelae could be kept in them or propped up against the walls: and documents inscribed on a building were nearly as immovable as the building itself. Third, though some sanctuaries were on or near boundaries, most were 'central places', whether in actuality or in symbolic terms for a particular community. Fourth, they were accessible. Though there were taboos, and though access was restricted for non-citizens or non-Greeks, a full member of the polity had access, whether normally or on certain stated days. Ideas of visibility and of consultability clearly predominated once the practice of setting up written public documents took root.

7. Documents and Democracy

'Documents' for a Greek historian do not mean administrative archives created and kept privily in a palace, but inscriptions set up in some accessible location. For the majority of our extant documents, literacy provided the means, while piety and/or display provided the driving force. However, for public documents, the driving force was the need to record major community acts or to account in real or symbolic ways for the handling of community monies. That force was far stronger in the republican microstates where the free adult males regarded themselves as a bounded group which *was* the state because all were partners in 'the common thing' (*to koinon*) and all could 'share in the polity' (*metechein tēs politeias*) like the shareholders in a company.[36] The further a polity travelled down that road, the firmer was the collective view that shareholders needed an accessible record of their decisions, both to provide consistency and to check unauthorized acts by, as it were, the company's managers and directors. Hence, the frequency with which a polity set up public documents reflected the 'advancedness' of its democracy. Though Athens provided the template, as the first in the field and the most thoroughgoing about it, she was not unique: first Argos and Miletos followed suit, then Thebes and most of the larger Aegean states, then the Achaian and Aitolian Leagues. Conversely, the fact that Sparta, Corinth, and Rhodes have yielded so few public documents of the genres listed above reflects their retention of oligarchic regimes. There were exceptions, such as intermittently democratic but epigraphically inert Syracuse, or monarchic but epigraphically lively Epeiros, but by and large the generalization holds, to warn us that a polity's political or cultural importance does not correlate with its propensity to 'show its workings' on stone.

8. Documents and 'Documents'

This paper has mainly focused on practicality, whether widely or narrowly interpreted. However, the 'symbolic' role of public documentation has already been illustrated by the dossiers of Priene and Aphrodisias, each of them set up on walls in a prominent public

[36] For the nexus of thought and the vocabulary, see *imprimis* Walter (1993).

place in order to constitute a patchwork 'charter' of the polity's position and status within the wider world. Those two cities were hardly the first players of this particular game. A sentence of Isokrates' *Panegyrikos* of 380 compares the (to Greeks, shameful) 'King's Peace', imposed upon Greece by the Persian king with Spartan complaisance in winter 387/6, with the honourable peace which 'we' (i.e. the Athenians) had made with one of his predecessors: a sentence which clearly implies that the texts of both treaties were inscribed on a publicly visible stela at Athens.[37] If we can trust Isokrates, the latter document, whatever its imputed date and however unreliable its *Wortlaut*, was therefore already being used retrospectively to 'charter' the legitimacy of Athenian imperial control of the Aegean in the fifth century. In contrast, earlier generations of Greek politicians had tended to use oracles, seeking not so much divine guidance as divine sanction for the despatch of a colony, for new rulers or ruling systems, or for other uncomfortable decisions provisionally taken by the polity concerned but hard to implement without a god's backing. This was, as it were, the 'oracle mode' of chartering public decisions or of legitimating power. By the early fourth century, as both Isokrates' citation and other examples make clear, polities were turning to 'decree mode' instead, while scholars or publicists were not above improving, recreating, or even inventing the texts of such decrees in the course of massaging the profile of this or that city or polity. The practice was not new, for bogus or *ex post facto* oracles had littered the landscape for centuries: nor did it cease with the Greek microstates, for the impulses behind bogus monastic charters, or behind the Donations of Constantine, were closely similar. It does remind us, however, of a historian's duty to distrust his/her sources.

9. Epilogue

In very simple fashion this paper has attempted to describe the complexities of Greek practice in the matter of archives and public

[37] Isok. 4. *Paneg.* 120: 'One might best visualize the size of the transformation if one were to read-and-compare the treaty provisions made in our time and those which have now been inscribed.' Testimonia for the two peace treaties are set out in *Staatsverträge*, ii, nos. 152 ('Peace of Kallias', 449/8?) and 242 ('King's Peace' of 387/6). This is not the place to broach the problems involved.

documentation. It has focused on general administrative practice rather than on the particularities of the layout of documents, for since no original holographs survive the task of tracing the transmission of text from draft form into surviving lapidary form has proved an intricate business.[38] None the less, to ask why we have the documents we do, and not others, helps to integrate material and aspects which Greek historians and epigraphists tend to consider separately, if at all. Likewise, though no comparison with Near Eastern material or practices has been attempted, and though scholars used to that background will find much that is unfamiliar, there are notable overlaps. The extent of Greek borrowings and adaptations of non-Greek cultural goods and practices arouses considerable current debate, some scholars assuming endogenous development while others see Greece principally as a late-developing province of the east Mediterranean cultural *koinē*. The potential gain from tracing such overlaps is therefore considerable.

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[38] For efforts in this direction cf. Henry (1977) and Rhodes and Lewis (1997), 18–61.

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16

Tomoi Synkollēsimoi

WILLY CLARYSSE

Archives are essential for good government, but in order to be useful they need to be filed in a way that keeps them accessible. Today computers have completely overturned the way in which archives are kept, and within a generation it will be difficult to understand the intricacies of record-keeping before the twenty-first century. If the university administration of Leuven wants to know how many first-year male students from Antwerp have been enrolled during the last twenty years, the answer is found in a few seconds by a simple search on the university computer. Twenty years ago, this would have taken half a day, because the students would no doubt have been filed year by year in alphabetical order. To identify the male students from Antwerp would have meant going through all those files, looking them out one by one. In antiquity there was the additional problem that alphabetical classification was unknown in administrative documents until the second century BC,[1] and even after it had become common in the Roman period, it was limited to the first letter of the word or name, or at the most to the first and second letters.

How, then, was order kept in the archives of government offices in Graeco-Roman Egypt? We get a vivid picture of state record-keeping because of a dispute which dragged on from AD 90 to 124 as a result of bad record-keeping in the Arsinoite nome. The situation is described as follows by the former keepers of the public archives (βιβλιοφύλακες τῆς δημοσίας βιβλιοθήκης): 'Of the acts some have been lost, being torn and worn by age, others have been partly damaged, and several have been eaten away at the top because the places are hot.'[2] In AD 98 the prefect Junius Rufus ordered that the new keepers of the record office (βιβλιοθήκη) should accept the damaged rolls and have them pasted together at their predecessors' expense. Finally, after a series of lawsuits, the cost of repairing the rolls was paid from the sequestrated property of the heirs of the record-keepers and their secretary.

The dossier has been repeatedly used to illustrate the working of state archives in Roman Egypt. Our interest here is in one single detail in this process: the use of *tomoi synkollēsimoi* or 'pasted rolls'— i.e. a series of separate documents that have been pasted together to form a roll. I want to ask what types of documents were collected in this particular way, who wrote them and to whom, who kept them and when, and how this kind of record-keeping started and came to an end.

A word search through the CD-ROM of the *Duke Data Bank of Documentary Papyri* turned up only 19 instances of the words συγκολλήσιμος and συγκολλάω.[3] These can be subdivided into a few groups. Five of the passages deal with the authentication of subscriptions by the highest authorities.[4] The prefect of Egypt answered petitions (βιβλίδια) by writing his decision at the bottom in the form of a subscription (ὑπογραφή). A series of such answered petitions was then posted in a prominent place in the town where the prefect held court, e.g. the temple of Antinoos at Antinoe, at the local Caesareum or Isieion.[5] They were consulted on the spot by the petitioners, who could then authenticate the posting by means of six witnesses, who in turn had to attach their seal to the statement that both petition and response 'have been extracted and collated from a file of petitions delivered to the prefect which were fastened together [ἐκ τεύχους συγκολλησίμων βιβλιδίων] and posted in public'.

[1] The earliest example thus far attested in an administrative text dates from 114/13 BC, published by Verhoogt (1998), 214–19, with discussion on 118.

[2] P. Lugd.-Bat. 6. 15. 48–50.

[3] For the use of ὑποκολλάω as a synonym see Wilcken (1920), 25 n. 1, and Bell (1924), 223–4 (text now re-edited by Sijpesteijn and Worp 1996, with a further note on ὑποκόλλησις on p. 175).

[4] BGU 11. 2061 (AD 207), P. Oxy. 17. 2131 (AD 207), SB 16. 11980 = PSI 12. 1245 (AD 207), P. Oxy 1. 35 (AD 223), and SB 16. 13059 (AD 290).

[5] For further bibliography on this so-called *propositio libellorum* see P. Oxy. 65. 160.

In two cases this formula is followed by the number of the sheet (κόλλημα) in the roll (they were numbers 59 and 1009 in SB 16. 11980.14 and P. Oxy. 17. 2131. 5 respectively).

From the time of Hadrian onward the same method was followed in Rome for imperial subscriptions at the bottom of *libelli*, as was shown by Wilcken:[6] the emperor's answer was posted and the petitioners themselves had to take care of the authentication, by means of witnesses. Before Hadrian they apparently received an answer personally: Hadrian's reform made the administration a good deal lighter at the expense of the public. Although this is not explicitly stated in the texts, it is generally accepted that in Rome, too, imperial *rescripta* were posted in the form of a *tomos synkollēsimos*. When a petition was sent to the emperor through the prefect, as was normally the case in Egypt, both the imperial letter to the prefect and the subscribed *libellus* were posted in Alexandria, as is clear from P. Hamb. 1. 18. 6–10. P. Hamb. 1. 18 (AD 222) is a fragmentary list (ἀναγραφή) of *tomoi synkollēsimoi* originating from the *eisagōgeus*, the chancellor of the prefect, over a period of two years. Besides imperial letters and *rescripta*, it mentions a roll with 26 *epistalmata* (instructions from the prefect to lower-ranking officials), written in 28 numbered columns; a much larger group of 169 unknown documents, in 195 columns; and 8 *tomoi* over two years, one for every period of three months, containing no doubt *libelli* with a subscription by the prefect, at the rate of about 40 *rescripta* a month.

A second group of *synkollēsima* originates from the other end of the civil service, viz. the local notary office or *grapheion*. Two texts are especially illuminating. In Mitteis, Chrest. 183 (Soknopaiou Nesos; AD 46) the Egyptian Tesenouphis makes a somewhat illiterate bid for the *grapheion* of Soknopaiou Nesos. Among the tasks that he promises to fulfil are the following: 'I will deposit every four months all deeds that I will draw up, in a *tomos synkollēsimos*, in one register of abstracts [*eiromenon*] and in one list [*anagraphē*].'[7] This is echoed 160 years later by Mitteis, Chrest. 184 = P. Flor. 3. 357. That final page of a *tomos synkollēsimos* summarizes the contents of what precedes as follows: 'I, Apollonios alias Didymos son

of Apollonios, appointed as head of the *grapheion* of the western toparchy of the Oxyrhynchite nome, have deposited the preceding *synkollēsimon*, drawn up by me in the month Mesore of the current year for one register and the same (information) in a register of abstracts [*eiromenon*] and in a list [*anagraphē*].'[8]

The notaries apparently submitted the originals of the texts written by them to a(n unnamed) higher authority in the form of long pasted rolls;[9] added to these were a list of abstracts, called *eiromenon*, and a short list with the titles only, called *anagraphē*. We know from other texts that these were delivered to the *bibliophylakes* (record-keepers) of the *bibliothēkē enktēseōn*, the register of real property. But a second original was sent to a central office in Alexandria, the *katalogeion*, for registration, again in the form of a *tomos synkollēsimos*. After being checked and annotated by the so-called *eikonistai*, the originals were deposited in the *bibliothēkē Hadrianē*, and a roll of copies was sent to the *Nanaion*.[10]

A second *bibliothēkē*, the *bibliothēkē dēmosia* ('public registry office'), kept copies of all public documents, which were provided to it by the *stratēgos* and the royal scribe, the main officials of the nome. These were of many kinds: diaries of officials, official correspondence, census declarations and lists of taxpayers, tax returns, petitions, etc. Both officials and private persons could consult the archive and receive abstracts from it. Thanks to such abstracts, we sometimes get a glimpse of how the *tomoi* were ordered in the archive: the individual documents were referred to by the number of the *tomos* and the *kollēma* (the 'sheet' within the *tomos*). A very full reference may run as follows: 'From the fifth *tomos* of the house-by-house registration, of which the title in the margin is: Arsinoites, *meris* of Polemon, *stratēgos* Apollonides, house-by-house registration, 2nd year of the deceased Hadrian, Tebtynis' (PSI 14. 1446. 1–5).

In the archives documents could be kept and ordered in dif-

[6] Wilcken (1920), 14–42; Wilcken (1930).

[7] καὶ καταχωρίζω σοι διὰ τετράμηνα πάντας τοὺς δι' ἐμοῦ οἰκονομηθησομένους χρηματισμοὺς ἐν τόμῳ συνκολλησίμῳ καὶ εἰρομένῳ ἑνὶ καὶ ἀναγραφῇ μιᾷ καὶ δώσω σοι καταχωρισμὸν βυβλίων (δρ.) ὀκτώ (I have regularized the spelling).

[8] Ἀπολλώνιος ὁ καὶ Δίδυμος Ἀπολλωνίου συσταθεὶς πρὸς τῷ γρα(φείῳ) λιβ(ὸς) τοπ(αρχίας) Ὀξυρ(υγχίτου) κατεχώρισα τὸ προκείμενον συνκολλήσιμον τοῦ ὑπ' ἐμοῦ τελειωθέντος τῷ Μεσορὴ μηνὶ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος (ἔτους) χρη(ματισμοῦ) α καὶ ἐν εἰρομένῳ καὶ ἀναγραφῇ τὸ ἴσον.

[9] See Wolff (1978), 52–5, who claims that the *tomoi* remained in the local notary offices. However, since hardly any *tomoi* were found in the excavated *grapheion* of Tebtynis or that of Soknopaiou Nesos (cf. Segré 1926: 105 n. 1), it is more likely that they were sent to the *bibliothēkē* in the capital.

[10] For archive-keeping in Roman Egypt see Cockle (1984); Burkhalter (1990).

ferent ways: as separate sheets kept together in bundles, as copies and abstracts written out on normal papyrus rolls, but also under the form of pasted rolls, *tomoi synkollēsimoi*, or *synkollēsima*. This looks at first sight like a Roman innovation, used in the office of the prefect himself and in the newly instituted *bibliothēkai*, the public record offices and the registers of real property in the nome capitals, the *katalogeion* and the *bibliothēkē Hadrianē* in the capital. Because local officials and notaries had to send documents, copies, and abstracts to the record offices in the metropolis and in the capital, they came into contact with this type of record-keeping, and thus the habit could have spread to the local administration and to private practice.

A second approach, however, corrects this view. I have tried to collect all existing evidence for *tomoi synkollēsimoi* which have actually survived among our papyrological documents, a task which has proved far more difficult and time-consuming than I had expected. There are no lists of this type of document available—even the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* does not list them. I have thus far collected over 230 items, but I am well aware that my database is far from complete.[11] Many editors, not only the older ones, are not interested in the phenomenon: sometimes a *tomos* is published as a single text, but often it is split up over several issues of a publication, since in fact different texts are grouped together on the roll. Sometimes parts of a *tomos* are published in different places.[12] In other cases single sheets may have become detached from the roll and only the *kollēma* number at the top of the sheet remains as uncertain evidence that the text was once part of a *tomos*. Thus the archive of Apollonios, the well-known *stratēgos* of the Apollonopolite Heptakomia, contains a dozen applications for tax reduction on non-irrigated lands, all dated to AD 118.[13] They seem to be written on individual sheets, but P. Giss. 6 clearly joins two applications in a *tomos*. Probably the other applications were also part of that same *tomos*, but have become detached in the course of time. Since the individual applications have not been numbered, we shall probably never know

for certain. The *libelli* of the Decian persecution seem to have been kept as individual sheets; only Wilcken, Chrest. 125, is definitely part of a *tomos*. Some editors regard any numbered column as part of a *tomos synkollēsimos*, forgetting that columns in ordinary rolls were also often numbered.[14]

The starting point of this second line of enquiry was an extraordinary papyrus roll in Brussels.[15] It is 1.15 m. long and contains 18 documents, all very much alike in format and script: long vertical strips of papyrus, each containing writing in at least three different hands and pasted to each other to form a roll (Figure 16.1). The Brussels text is one of the best-preserved examples of a *tomos synkollēsimos*. Each constituent document contains a census declaration from a different household head, and all are addressed to a certain Apion, royal scribe of the Lower Egyptian Lycopolite nome. These *apographai* are written by professional scribes, but signed by the declarants or their representatives in their own less fluent hands. They are therefore originals, not copies. After they had been pasted, each document was numbered, no doubt in the office of the royal scribe, and signed by a clerk of the office. The numbering shows that there were originally at least 107 of these declarations and that the original roll was at least 7 m. long. The texts are arranged in chronological order.

The best-preserved items in my database are this Brussels papyrus with 18 consecutive documents and a papyrus divided between Berlin, Paris, and New York and still only partly published, which contains 74 non-consecutive bank receipts (Figure 16.2).[16] P. Bub. 1. 4, though more fragmentary, contains remnants of 73 columns. Thanks to the system of numbering, which is found in some 50 texts,[17] we know that *tomoi* of over a hundred sheets were quite normal.[18] The highest number is 433 for a series of *libelli* of

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[11] For this database see http://lhpc.arts.kuleuven.ac.be/archives_folder/tomos.xls [28 Jan. 2003].

[12] For example, SB 12. 11274 + 13087 + 13088 are parts of one roll (this is stated explicitly only in the fragmentary 13088).

[13] e.g. P. Brem. 34 and 36, P. Giss. 4–7, P. Lips. 266, SB 14. 13246 (?).

[14] It thus remains uncertain whether BGU 15. 2471, P. Köln 2. 86, P. Oslo 3. 92, P. Oxy. 2. 245, P. Oxy. 49. 3476, P. Oxy. 58. 3928, PSI 10. 1136, and SB 18. 13288, all single texts with a *kollēma* number, derive from *tomoi synkollēsimoi*; this is fairly probable for the census declarations among them, because this type of document was usually filed in pasted rolls.

[15] P. Brussels 1, re-edited by Nachtergael (1974).

[16] P. Berl. Frisk 1 + P. Col. 2. 1 recto 4 + BGU 13. 2270 + 2271 + SB 16. 13060 + P. Graux 3. 30.

[17] Many texts have lost their upper parts, and clearly not all rolls were numbered.

[18] Normally each item in a pasted roll consisted of a single one-column sheet; for the possibility of sheets comprising several columns, with a more complicated numbering system, see Lewis (1974), 81 n. 20.
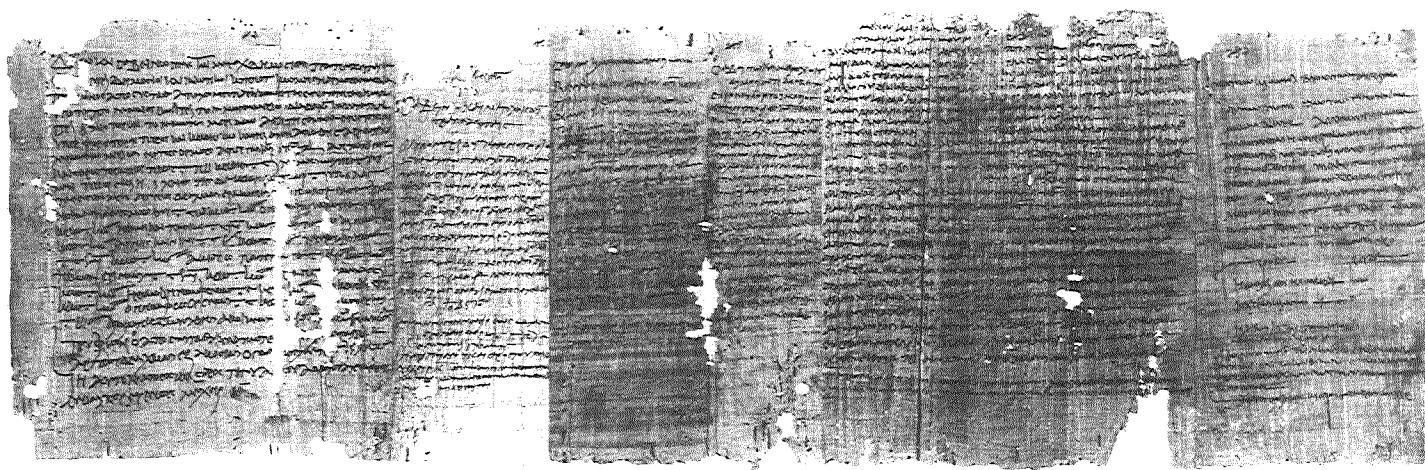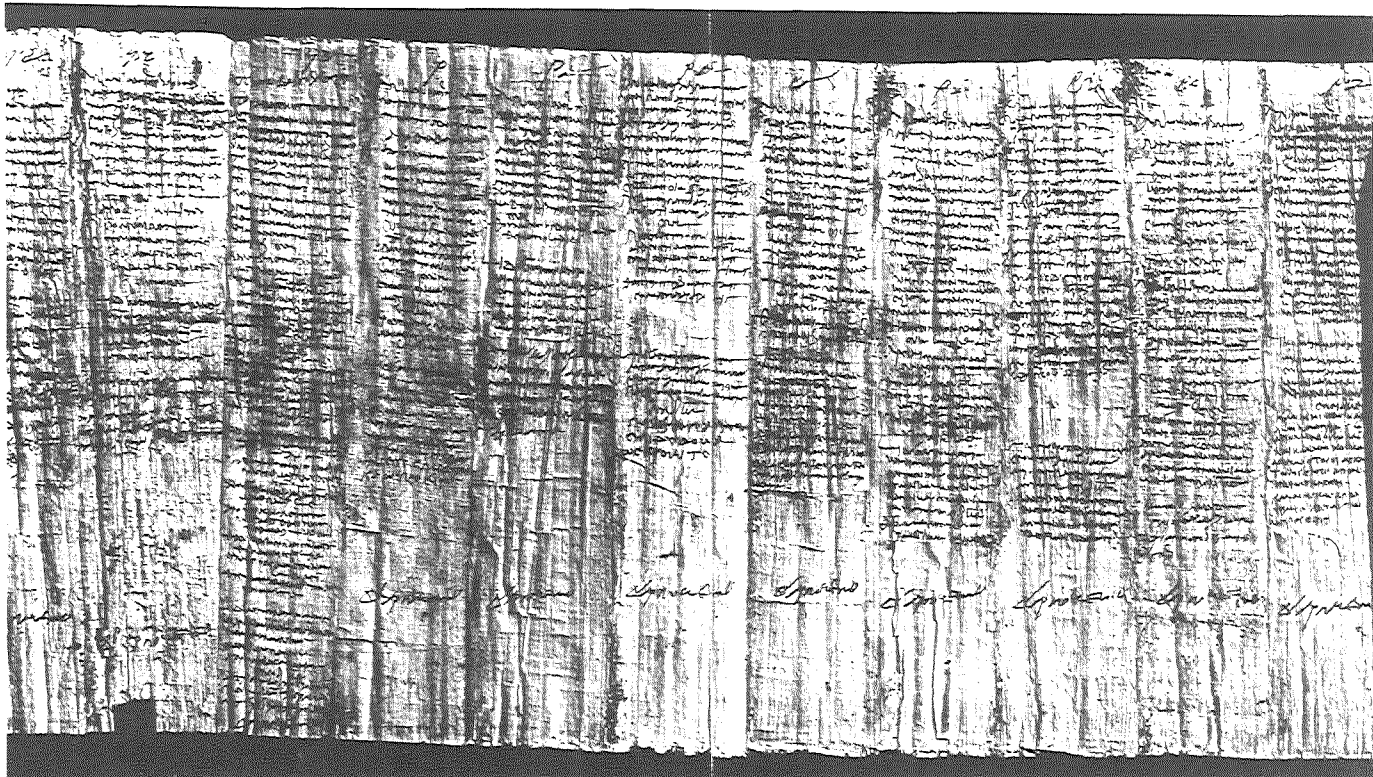
(*upper*) FIG. 16.1. *Tomos synkollēsimos* with census declaration (Lycopolites Delta, AD 174) (P. Brux. inv. 7616 recto (=P. Brux. 1))

(*lower*) FIG. 16.2. *Tomos synkollēsimos* with bank receipts (Arsinoites, AD 74) (P. Graux 3. 30)

Decius (Wilcken, Chrest. 125), of which in fact only a single one is preserved. P. Oslo 3. 98 and PSI 10. 1136, two *tomoi* of census returns, contain the numbers 392 and 253 respectively, and 14 more rolls contain numbers over 100.[19]

I have here used a narrow definition of the term *tomos synkollēsimos*. A normal papyrus roll, bought in the shop, consisted of some 20 sheets pasted together in the factory,[20] and reached a length of some 4 m. When more was needed, a few extra sheets of another roll could easily be pasted on at the end. The result was indeed a 'pasted roll' in the etymological sense of the word, but not a *tomos synkollēsimos* in the technical sense. Therefore I have excluded from my search second-hand rolls made by joining used papyrus in order to reuse the verso for books or documents: thus P. Oxy 6. 986, which combines several completely unrelated documents in order to use the back for a copy of Thucydides, or P. Oxy. 2. 223, a copy of the fifth book of the *Iliad*, written on the back of at least two documentary rolls which were glued together.[21] In P. Lond. inv. 604 two rolls (a list of landowners in 9 columns and a register of land in 12 columns) have been joined with their texts in opposite directions to receive on the back the demotic Setne story.[22] P. Trophitis contains remnants of a roll consisting of used papyrus sheets glued together, sometimes even 'without any attempt to produce a writing surface with the fibres consistently horizontal or vertical'.[23] P. Ryl. 2. 121 is a request for the appointment of a guardian for a minor; the back is reused 'after the petition has been joined to another piece of papyrus'.[24] I also do not consider as pasted rolls those demotic

[19] Wilcken, Chrest. 226 (105, see BL I), P. Brux. 1 and P. Oxy. 58. 3928 (107), P. Oxy. 1. 53+6. 983+64. 4441 (115), P. Oxy. 46. 3276–84 (120), PSI 8. 874 (122), P. Flor 3. 301 (124), P. Oxy. 6. 896 (128), Wilcken, Chrest. 401 (153), P. Flor 1. 32 (175), SB 18. 13904–9 (181), P. Oslo 3. 92 (197), P. Bour. 18 (205).

[20] In some factory rolls the bulk of the joins seems to be deliberately reduced by removing one of the four superimposed layers; cf. Turner and Parsons (1987), 7 n. 21; P. Berl. Sarischouli 160 (with further bibliography).

[21] One of them is the well-known petition of Dionysia (P. Oxy. 2. 237), cf. Bastianini (1995), 31–2. The Greek translation of the Egyptian legal manual, P. Oxy. 46. 3285, may also have been written on a pasted roll of unrelated used papyrus.

[22] Griffiths (1900), 67–8. The Greek lists on the recto are published in P. Lond. 3, pp. 70–87.

[23] Cf. Herring (1993), 7. See also P. Oxy. 54. 3756 (with plate): two documents pasted by private persons, one of them *transversa charta*.

[24] Cf. also P. Strassb. 1. 22; SB 16. 12526 (Heroninus archive), where two sheets with writing in opposite directions are joined in order to reuse their versos; SB 22. 15569: two texts have been pasted together, one a receipt for tax payment, the other

texts where the notary appended his draft at the very beginning of the final text (cf. Pestman 1994). In collecting evidence I was looking for a type of filing system in which already existing interrelated documents were brought together in a meaningful new whole. When the documents are directed to the same official, or are of the same type, their relationship is immediately clear; in other cases the connection may escape us today. When the new whole consists of only two documents, the pasting is the equivalent of our paper clip, and we are at the lower limit of what we can call a roll; when there are more than 10 of them, it becomes part of a system of filing.

In more than half of my 235 cases, however, only one sheet of an original *tomos* survives, preceded or followed by the illegible line ends or beginnings of an adjoining sheet. The documentary value of these items is of course severely limited, and it is generally impossible to ascertain what type of documents were collected and in what order they were classified. Sometimes an original *tomos* seems to have been broken up in modern times into its individual sheets, perhaps because the glue had become unstuck during the process of cleaning (some restorers may even have preferred to detach the components of a pasted roll). Thus the archive of Apollonios, the *stratēgos* of the Apollinopolite Heptakomia, contains several census returns from the village of Tanyaithis. It has been suggested by some editors that they may once have belonged to a *tomos synkollēsimos*,[25] but in fact all the items appeared as individual sheets, until R. Düttenhofer published a new census return, to the left of which was stuck another very fragmentary document of the same type (Düttenhofer 1997). This suggests that the texts do indeed come from a pasted roll. In the same archive P. Giss. 6 preserves three consecutive pasted sheets of a roll of 'offers for leasing state land at a lower rate'; there can be no doubt that P. Giss. 4, 5, and 7, which now present themselves as individual sheets, originally belonged to that same roll.

The most typical *tomoi* consists of documents of a single type, pasted in chronological order. Most documents are originals, not

a *kat' andra* list sent to the *stratēgos*. The hands are different. But the texts stand upside down in relation to one another, so that clearly the intention was not to make a workable roll; P. Oxy. 22. 2341.

[25] P. Alex.-Giss., p. 25: 'Ces coïncidences sont favorables à l'idée que nous avons là les restes d'un τόμος συγκολλήσιμος, fait avec les déclarations de Tanyaithis, pour le mois de Pachôn, et conservé par les bureaux d'Apollônios.'

copies, as can be seen from the fact that they contain subscriptions in a hand different from the main text. Nearly half are census declarations, declarations of property, and declarations of unwatered land, directed at officials at nome level. For these declarations a typical format seems to have been in use: narrow strips of papyrus were cut from a roll, sent in to the administration, and then glued to one another. The height of the individual sheet is the normal height of the roll (about 30 cm.), the breadth is between 6 and 10 cm. This narrow format is of course not ideal for pasting into a roll. The same format was used in the Ptolemaic period for *nauklēros* receipts and surety documents, which were also kept in government offices, but apparently not yet pasted into *tomoi*.[26] When the papyrus sheets were of different height, they were mostly aligned at the bottom, with an irregular upper margin, as in a *tomos* directed to the state bankers and containing bank receipts for payment of transport of wheat, later reused in Theadelpheia for a long *pittakia* list (Figure 16.2).[27]

Though in a substantial number of cases the name of the addressee was not given or is not preserved, the habit of collecting incoming documents such as reports, applications, and petitions seems to have been widespread in the offices of the *bibliothēkai* and in the government of the nomes, including the *stratēgos* and the royal scribe, but also with state bankers. In the administration of the nome capitals it became popular after the reforms of Septimius Severus in AD 199. Moreover, fragments of at least two *tomoi* were found in the archive of the village scribe Petaus. One (or two) contained proposals for liturgists addressed to two different *stratēgoi*,[28] the third contained notifications of death.[29] Apparently these were copies, and the village scribe has here taken over the filing system of the *bibliothēkē* and of some higher officials.

Outgoing documents were rather copied in ordinary rolls, and accounts were hardly ever collected into *tomoi*. As to content, it is clear

[26] The demotic surety documents published by F. de Cenival in P. Lille dem. 2 all present themselves now as single items except for P. Lille dem. 2. 50 and 51, which are pasted together. Did the glue perhaps dissolve when the mummy cartonnage was undone? In that case pasted rolls reused in mummy cartonnage would no longer be identifiable. But we do have several pasted rolls from cartonnage in the 1st cent. BC.

[27] For this text see P. Graux 3, where further bibliography is given. Cf. also P. Petaus 75+90, two documents aligned at the bottom with an irregular top margin, one of them being 3 cm. longer than the other.

[28] P. Petaus 75+90 and 10+77 possibly belonged to the same *tomos*.

[29] P. Petaus 7 = C. P. Gr. 62 (with pl. 61).

that certain types of document were rarely, if ever, bundled into *tomoi*. Thus, only four *tomoi* consist of petitions.[30] Within the regular system of the first two centuries AD, petitions were apparently not grouped in *tomoi*. Even official correspondence was usually copied out on a new roll; only eight *tomoi* with correspondence have been found.[31] Tax receipts could be written on separate sheets, or a larger sheet could be used several times, new receipts being added each time the taxpayer went to the tax office. But taxpayers hardly ever bundled their own receipts into a *tomos*.[32] Most receipts in the database belong to mixed rolls, often in the private sphere.[33] One has the impression that these mixed *tomoi* usually consisted of only a few sheets. By far the most common type of document are the *apographai*: 30 *kat' oikian apographai* and 45 other declarations, a third of the total. Another frequent type (30 in number) are reports of all kinds: by *episkeptai*, *epitērētai*, *chōmatepimelētai*, tax farmers, public doctors, etc. Most texts are originals, as can be seen from the change of hands within the documents: only 12 are probably copies. Mixed rolls, containing different types of document, are rare: P. Lond. 3. 1164 contains receipts, sales, and other business documents; SB 16. 13005–11 contain private leases and *hypomnēmata* to different landowners, some of them written by the same scribe; BGU 11. 2095–100 (AD 83) look like a dossier for a court case. Perhaps it is no coincidence that they all belong to the private sphere, where *tomoi* were never a normal way of recordkeeping.[34]

[30] SB 14. 11274+18. 13087+13088 (4 BC); SB 14. 11381 (AD 115–17); BGU 3. 731 (AD 180); P. Oxy. 1. 71 (AD 303).

[31] BGU 8. 1743, 1745, 1751, 1753, 1754 (63 BC; all parts of one *tomos* from the office of the royal scribe); Hanafi (1992) (AD 110–27; *stratēgos*); SB 18. 13175 (AD 194; royal scribe), P. Oxy. 42. 3030 (AD 202; royal scribe); P. Bub. 1. 4 (AD 221; *dioikētēs*, incoming and outgoing); P. Oxy. 47. 3348 (AD 228–31; *stratēgos*); P. Berl. Sarischouli 10 (c.AD 250; private); Stud. Pal. 5. 52–6 (AD 266–8; *boulē* of Hermopolis, incoming and outgoing). With the exception of the BGU roll, most texts are fairly late.

[32] Exceptions are BGU 3. 748 (tax receipts for a house; AD 62); P. Hamb. 4. 249 (receipts for garden tax and sheep tax; AD 166).

[33] e.g. P. Ryl. 2. 108+200 (AD 110–12); SB 8. 9879–80 = P. Kron. 17–18 (tax receipt and declaration of property; AD 140); SB 16. 13227 (declaration under oath and receipt; AD 144–8); Wilcken, Chrest. 226 (declaration of unwatered land and banker's receipt; AD 162–3); SB 20. 15188 (AD 212); Stud. Pal. 20. 30+31 (receipt for a loan and marriage contract; AD 230); CPR 5. 6 (receipt for the price of a cloak; AD 306).

[34] Other 'private' *tomoi* also present irregularities *vis-à-vis* the regular official *tomoi*: see the examples given in n. 33 and P. Oxy. 4. 836 (66–65 BC), P. Amst. 10 (10–8 BC), SB 12. 10788 (AD 61–4; L. Pompeius Niger), BGU 3. 748 (AD 62), P. Oxy.

The documentation is mostly Roman. Ptolemaic records were usually kept as independent sheets or copied unto ordinary rolls.[35] But though the expression τόμος συγκολλήσιμος is not found before Roman times, the practice was already well known in the Ptolemaic period. The famous Revenue Laws of the third century BC, now in the Bodleian Library, consisting of two different rolls, are a border case. As was shown by J. Bingen (1945: 21), the first roll, which is the better-preserved, is made up by pasting together four related documents.[36] P. Freib. 3. 12–33, however, was a real *tomos synkollēsimos* of agoranomic contracts—originals, not copies—probably kept at the record office of Krokodilon Polis and dating to the early second century BC. By the first century BC the filing of official letters in pasted rolls was well established in the offices of the royal scribe.[37]

The use of *tomoi* for filing reports and declarations of all kinds became much more standard in the Roman administration. Four items date from the Ptolemaic period,[38] seven from the first thirty years of Roman rule.[39] The figures for the first three centuries AD roughly correspond to the rise and fall of papyrus documentation as a whole.[40]

AD 1–49 :   3 items
AD 50–99 :   15 items
AD 100–49 :   43 items
AD 150–99 :   56 items

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3. 588 (AD 108), P. Bon. 24 (AD 135), PSI 10. 1119 (AD 156), P. Vars. 10 (AD 160), P. Oxy. 12. 1578 (3rd cent. AD). It is no doubt significant that no certain *tomoi* are found in the Heroninus archive, except reused as writing material (e.g. P. Prag. 1. 113, SB 16. 12526).

[35] e.g. the Petrie Wills (P. Petrie² vol. i) or CPR XVIII.

[36] Cf. also P. Oxy. 63. 4356, where an extra piece is added at the end to make the roll longer, and P. Teb. 1. 27, consisting of two 'circular letters' pasted together by the village scribe Menches in 113 BC (I thank A. Verhoogt for this reference). In P. Hamb. 1. 39, a roll of receipts for the army, four sheets were tied at the end by means of papyrus cords (see pl. XIII).

[37] BGU 8. 1743, 1745, 1751, 1753, 1754 are all remnants of one or more rolls from the office of the royal scribe of the Heracleopolite nome, dated to 63 BC. New papyri derived from the same cartonnage, also from a *tomos*, were presented by E. Salmenkivi at the Florence congress in 1998.

[38] P. Freib. 3. 12–33 (179–174 BC); P. Berl. 25844 ined. (information from E. Salmenkivi) (c.100–88 BC); P. Oxy. 4. 836 (66–65 BC); BGU 8. 1743, 1745, 1751, 1753 (63 BC).

[39] BGU 4. 1059+1149, 1053, 1150, 1151, 1167 (13–12 BC); P. Amst. 41. (9–8 BC); SB 14. 11274+18 13087+13088 (4 BC).

[40] Cf. the table given by Habermann (1998), 147.

AD 200–49 :   47 items
AD 250–99 :   37 items
AD 300–50 :   19 items

Most fourth-century examples come from the first quarter of the century. Only the *logistēs* (*curator*) of Oxyrhynchus continued to file his papers in the old-fashioned way until 350,[41] when other officials had given up the habit for nearly a generation.[42]

Recurrent characteristics of the *tomoi synkollēsimoi* may be listed as follows:

(1) They are usually original documents, not copies.
(2) They are united by a common factor, e.g. the same type of document, documents received or made by one single office, documents on one single case.
(3) They usually belong to the official level (only 17 *tomoi* out of 228 are possibly private). Documents grouped in a *tomos* are the official copies of a text, whereas private copies are usually on individual sheets.
(4) The most common type of document are declarations; especially frequent are *kat' oikian apographai* (30 items) and other declarations to officials at the nome level (45 items).
(5) They are usually arranged according to some logical order, e.g. chronological, alphabetical, topographical.
(6) Often the individual sheets were numbered after pasting, to allow for easy reference.

This survey, based on a preliminary collection of the relevant data, has sought to present one of the official methods of filing information that was started in the hellenistic period but systematically developed in both the central and local record offices during the first three centuries of Roman rule. As a practice it seems to have

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[41] P. Oxy. 60. 4084 (petition to Fl. Eusebios; AD 339); P. Oxy. 55. 3793–4 (AD 340; official letters to the *logistēs*); P. Oxy. 54. 3774 (AD 341; declaration about nomination to a liturgy, addressed to Fl. Eusebios); P. Oxy. 1. 87 = Wilcken, Chrest. 446 (AD 342; declarations by shipowners to Fl. Dionysarius).

[42] The latest documents not directed to the *logistēs* and collected in a *tomos* are P. Amh. 138 (AD 326; directed to the *stratēgos*), P. Vindob. Worp 3 (AD 321; no official mentioned) and P. Oxy. 63. 4341 (AD 319; directed to the *stratēgos*). In the same period six *tomoi* derive from the offices of the *logistēs* (P. Oxy. 44. 3195, AD 311; P. Oxy. 1. 53+6 983+64. 4441, AD 316; P. Oxy. 6. 896, AD 316; P. Oxy. 54. 3746, AD 319; P. Coll. Youtie 1. 81 and P. Oxy. 45. 3249, AD 326).

come to an end in the middle of the fourth century AD, though the reasons for this are unknown.

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Index